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- PANZER DRAGOON

32X
- WING WAR
- CLAY FIGHTER II

MEGADRIVE
- ROCKMAN
- STORY OF THOR
- ROAD RASH III

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MASTER SYSTEM
- STUFF ALL (SORRY!)

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- SMURFS



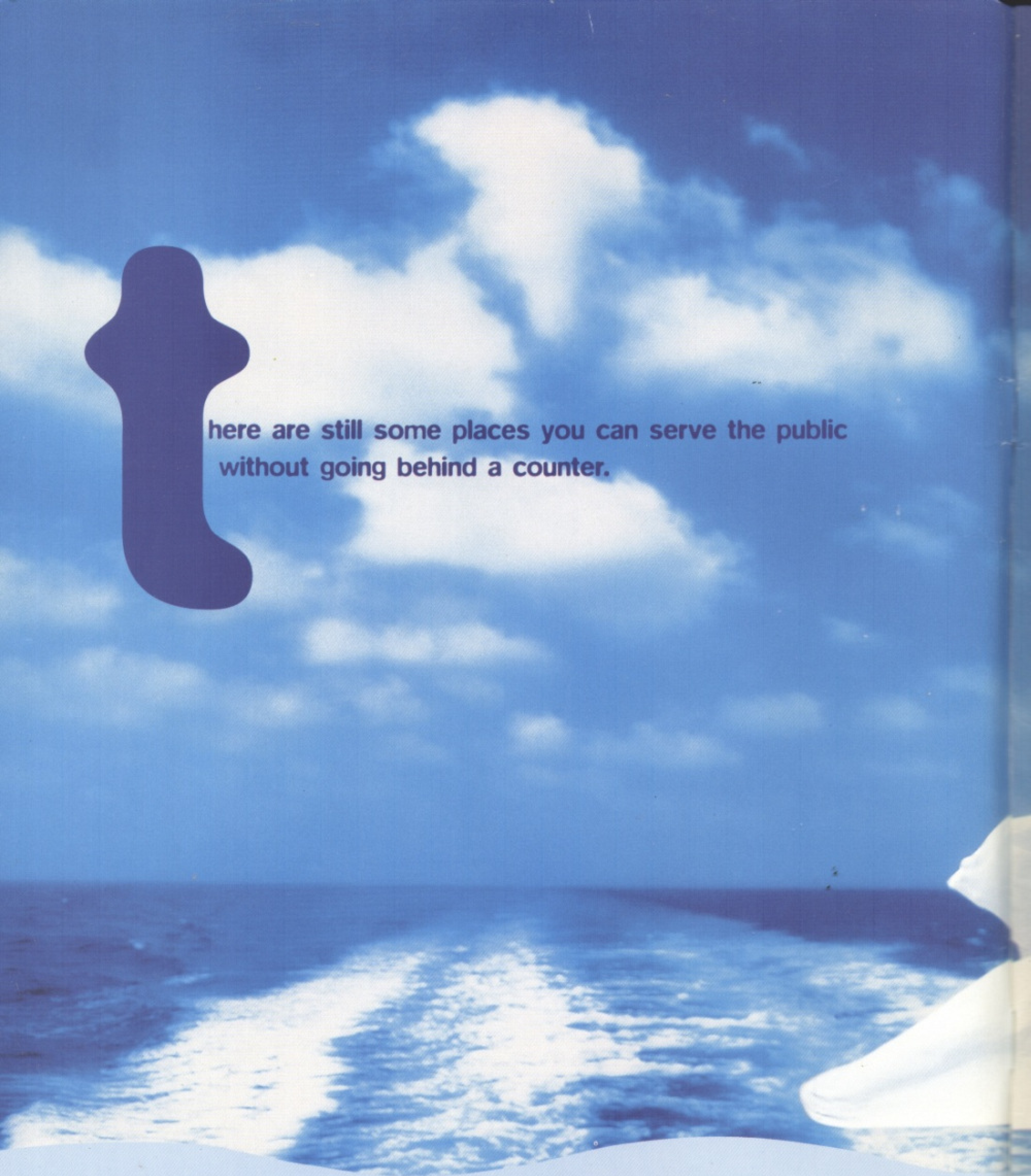
MORTAL KOMBAT II 32X

EXCLUSIVE: FIRST REVIEW!

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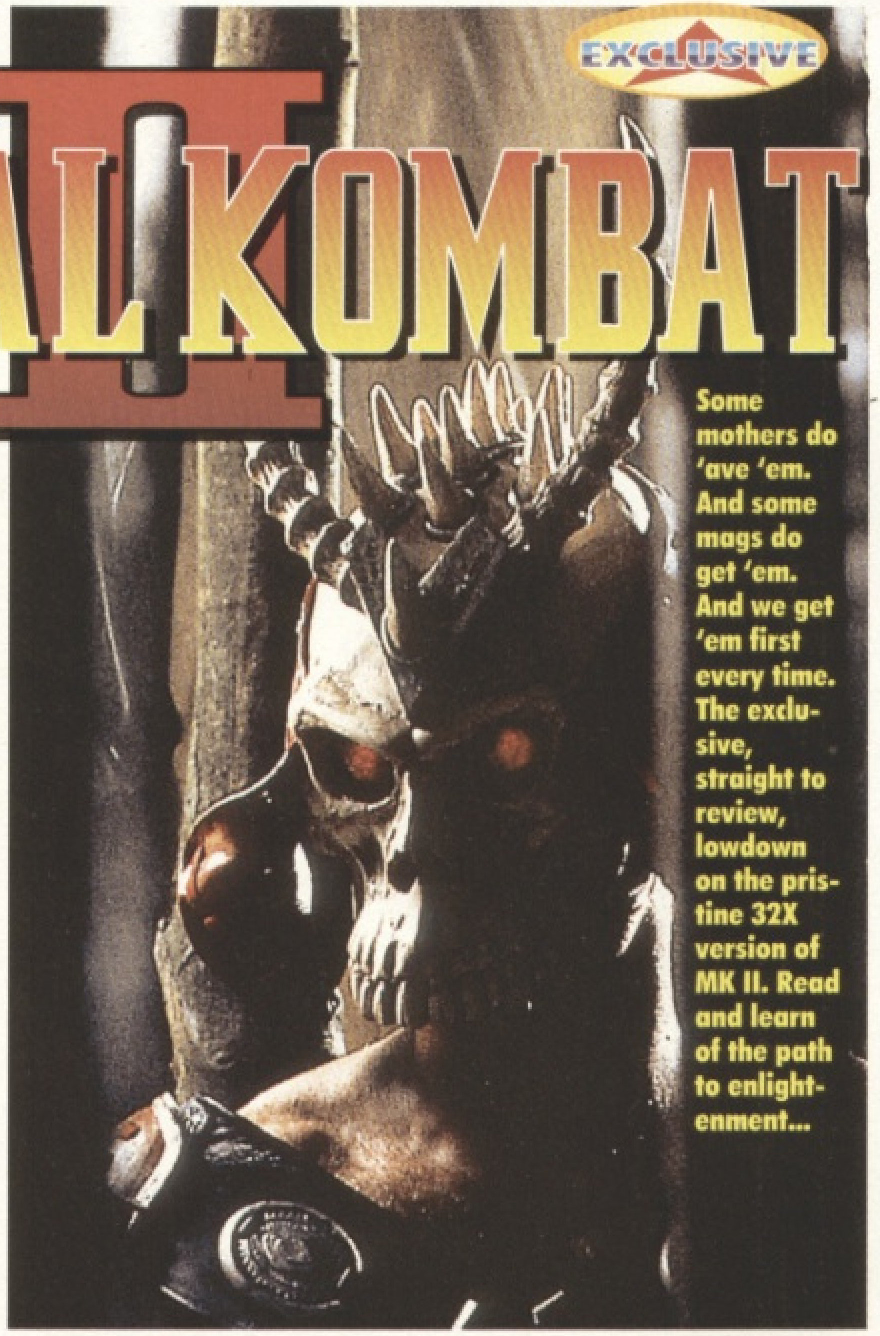
There are still some places you can serve the public without going behind a counter.

Patrolling the sea is vital if we're to make the planet a less dangerous place to live. It's a job that makes a difference. Every second of every day. After all, you're working for your country, not for an invisible boss or a soulless corporation. With that comes things some employers can't pretend to offer. A sense of maturity. Self confidence. Responsibility. You'll find that although you're serving others, you're also helping yourself.



COVER STORY 20

32X MORTAL KOMBAT II



Some mothers do 'ave 'em. And some mags do get 'em. And we get 'em first every time. The exclusive, straight to review, lowdown on the pristine 32X version of MK II. Read and learn of the path to enlightenment...



Hmm, yes your tonsils are inflamed. I recommend complete rest.



REGULARS

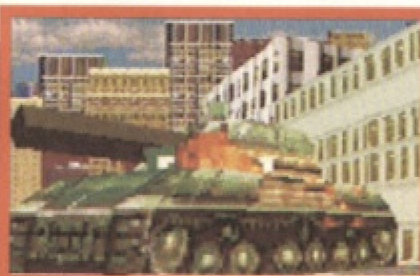
REVIEWS

MEGADRIVE

NTENTS



Those Romans are crazy. The sky will fall on our heads, etc, etc.



The dangers of in-tank barbecues revealed in our Metal Head review.



A dragon coughs an extyra-large furball at our hero.

T THE TRAFFIC!



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GREAT UNANSWERED QUESTIONS OF OUR TIME: 21 and 22: 21. Whatever happened to Toni Arthur? 22. When can we stop this?

Hello, Steve here. As if often the case, we have been left with a bit of a nasty space here so, as I wait for the final pages to go to the printers, it has fallen to me to fill it. It's a crappy dull Friday and all I can smell are the KFC boxes rotting under Oz's desk which formed the basis of his diet for the past three days. Gus has gone AWOL with a load of film, and Paul seems to have vanished off the face of the Earth. Anyway, that's this space filled now — and without upsetting any fragile-ego Editors. I must be feeling ill...



Well, we've got off to a cracking start this year by securing the first review of Acclaim's brilliant 32X conversion of Mortal Kombat II which replaces the juggle combos missing from the 16bit version — a real shot in the arm for the 32X. Sadly, the Saturn front has been quieter than a morgue this month with no review stuff arriving, but as we're expecting Shinobi X and Gotha any minute now this lull won't last long. This is going to be a real year of change as the 32X releases set to step up in number and the Saturn finally gets a UK release. The CES has shown some promising plug-thru games which are unveiled in our special report, and there's a Knuckles game on offer, too. Something tells me, 1995 is going to be rather smart...

CASH FOR PHOTOS BOOM!

Well, we reckoned you were a bunch of money-grabbing mercenaries and, sadly, we were right! No sooner had the issue hit the streets than strange photos of our beloved readership began to filter through. A worrying early trait is that most involve cross-dressing but, hey, we're not ones to judge. All the photos printed here are cash winners and the respective loot will be on its way to you as soon as we've done over the Alliance and Leicester. Right, on with the sadness...

BAD HAIRCUTS

A



Probably the easiest tenner most people will ever make, sadly the owner of this fine 'around the rim' trim didn't put their name with it! Also, notice the way the hair curls inwards, adding to the impression that it could indeed be a wig! A tenner awaits the person who can prove this is their pic!



B



An entry from our mates on our sister mag, The One For Amiga, as they unveil what must be the worst haircut this side of Robbie Williams. This is copper-topped Editor, Andy Nuttal, as a young kid looking as lonely as someone with hair like that should. Sadly, Andy won't be receiving any cash for the photo to make up for his appearance, as EMAP employees can't win!

THE LIST IN FULL...

Don't forget there are plenty of other categories to enter, and we've added a few more. Here's the list in full, with the value of both haircuts and cross-dressing suitably reduced...

PARENT DRESSED UP LIKE A POWER RANGER — £50
HUMAN PYRAMID FEATURING SIX PEOPLE — £45
MOONING OUT OF MOVING CAR — £40
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(£10 BONUS IF ALREADY "ENGAGED")
THE BIGGEST PANTS YOU CAN FIND — £10
YOUNGER BROTHER BOUND AND GAGGED IN CUPBOARD — £10
PAUL BUFTON AT SCHOOL — £10

RIAL

FULL MAKE OVER (DRESS-WEARING OBLIGATORY)

C



Andrew Ruddich impresses us with a sterling impersonation of Anita Dobson (Angie out of Eastenders). With a classy wig and clobber to put the 'Allo 'Allo girls to shame, Andrew has earnt a cool £35 — especially for making his Mum's pop socks reach his knees (mind you, she's must be pretty recognisable wandering around Tescos in that gear!). Oh yeah, we're also going to round his prize up to £40 for his uncanny facial resemblance to Nichola Stapleton (also off Eastenders).

D



Rand Walton has opted for the church-going look, although it looks like Rolf Harris has been doing his make-up! Thankfully, it's dark outside so his mates won't notice too much when he meets them. £35 on its way, young... er, man.

E



Geoff Harte, pater to son Richard, goes all sporty for the camera. We were foxed for a while and thought it was a pic of Martina Navratilova, but then we noticed the moustache. Martina's is much thicker. £35 heads from our wallet to Hornchurch....

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PEOPLE BEING SICK — £20
(£5 BONUS FOR ODD-COLOURED PUDDLE)
COVERED IN MUD — £15
SPOTTIEST PERSON EVER SEEN — £15
ENTIRE KITKAT IN MOUTH — £10
FAT MUMS — £10
(£10 BONUS IF IN SWIMMING COSSIE)

We're particularly after pics of Paul B at school, so if you went to school in Norwich between 1982-89, we want to see the pics (sports kit ones gain an extra fiver). The cash will be given for any we print. Multiple entries will be accepted, and if you have any combinations of the above, you will recieve a lump sum of the two values combined. Mark your pics: I'M DAVID BAILEY, GISSUS THE CASH, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.

DREAM MACHINES

The mind of a MEAN MACHINES team member is a dark and sordid realm. To celebrate the mystical forces at work, this month we plumb the deepest psychological recesses of the world of dreams.

STEVE



Steve's dream dates way back from his childhood when he had to confront a stone robot who was knocking down all of the houses in his home village, Southbourne. "The evil droid would just wander around kicking down houses willy-nilly. But me and my mates found this plunger thing, and if you pulled it the robot stopped. So we took it to the council and we threw it in the incinerator, making the stone thing crumble. And as a reward we were given a tin of Quality Street each." A small price to pay for the survival of mankind.
FAVE GAMES: INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER

OZ



By day mild-mannered Art Editor, by night purveyor of justice! Oz told us about this flickin' ace dream about the time he rescued an entire plane of hostages. "Yeah boyee, I was like commander of a crack force with guns and fings (sound FX — Peyoww! Boom!), and we saved all these poor people. But I had to go back for this liccle girl, and when I got back all my team were all dead. The liccle girl was alright though". Yes dear.
FAVE GAMES: RIDGE RACER, TOSHINDEN

GUS



Gus' eyes lit up with the prospect of delving into the subconscious, revealing a bizarre encounter with sharks that could walk. "I was with my family at home, and my Dad had just told us about the genetic experiments he had performed on sharks. At this point the house started to fill with water and the sharks came to seek their revenge. Aaarggh!" Hmm, time to lay off the Viz comics.
FAVE GAMES: TOSHINDEN, VIRTUA FIGHTER

CLAIRE



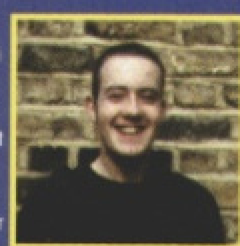
"Every night I have this fantastic recurring dream of winning the lottery. I'm always in a really sunny place and there are loads of swimming pools around me. And once I've picked up the cheque for all the millions of pounds, I'm straight on the phone to Lord EMAP to buy MEAN MACHINES so I can move the offices to St Vincent in the West Indies, where the magazine's made by robot copies of us." Cheers Claire.
FAVE GAMES: RIDGE RACER, DAYTONA

PAUL



"I can't normally remember my dreams, but there is one in particular that comes to mind. I'm this spy, a bit like James Bond, with flash car, top threads, and a lovely little villa on the Mediterranean. My sole responsibility is to track down other spies and destroy them before they pass on government secrets. Then I woke up and it was true, all true you know!" Paul's gone for a bit of a lie down.
FAVE GAMES: KILLER INSTINCT, RIDGE RACER

RAD



"I think it's about time the world knew about my cabbage fixation. I had this recurring dream as a kid that a robot had come to Earth to steal all of the cabbage resources. I was in the supermarket with my Mum and in burst the evil robot ready to vapourise anyone in his path. So we made a run for it, but all he really wanted was to nab the cabbages." Rad still likes cabbage for his dinner. Sometimes.
FAVE GAMES: TOSHINDEN, VIRTUA FIGHTER

CHAOS OV

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- 32X

Sega have ended the uncertainty and 'If-what-who-when' questions surrounding a Sonic game on the 32X. Since the add-on's launch Sega have admitted to having two possible Sonic games in production, but unsure which, if any, would become a completed product.



However, the unthinkable has not happened and we are to get a 'Sonic' title, though this time Knuckles is firmly the main star. Knuckles Ringstar is a platform game in the familiar mould with a lot of scenery quite reminiscent of Sonic 3 and Sonic and Knuckles. The characters and enemies also owe quite a bit to the previous titles.

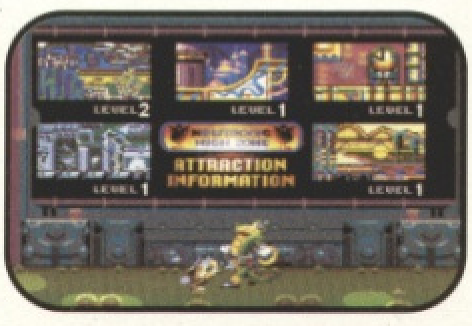
But this is the first title in which the superior qualities of the 32X hardware are showing through. This huge increase in colour capability makes Ringstar look stunningly detailed compared even to Sonic and Knuckles.



Special effects dazzle throughout, with the screen zooming into the player characters, and they even have Pseudo 3D game moves allowing them to jump in and out of the foreground. The speed of scrolling is incredible. But the new features are not all cosmetic. Knuckles is the subject of controversy because of its unusual and original gameplay mechanisms. Instead of controlling one character, you are in charge of two sprites linked by something resembling an elastic cord. One sprite leads the other, but the cord allows you to perform all sorts of neat tricks, like leap-frogging and catapulting both sprites at high speed.

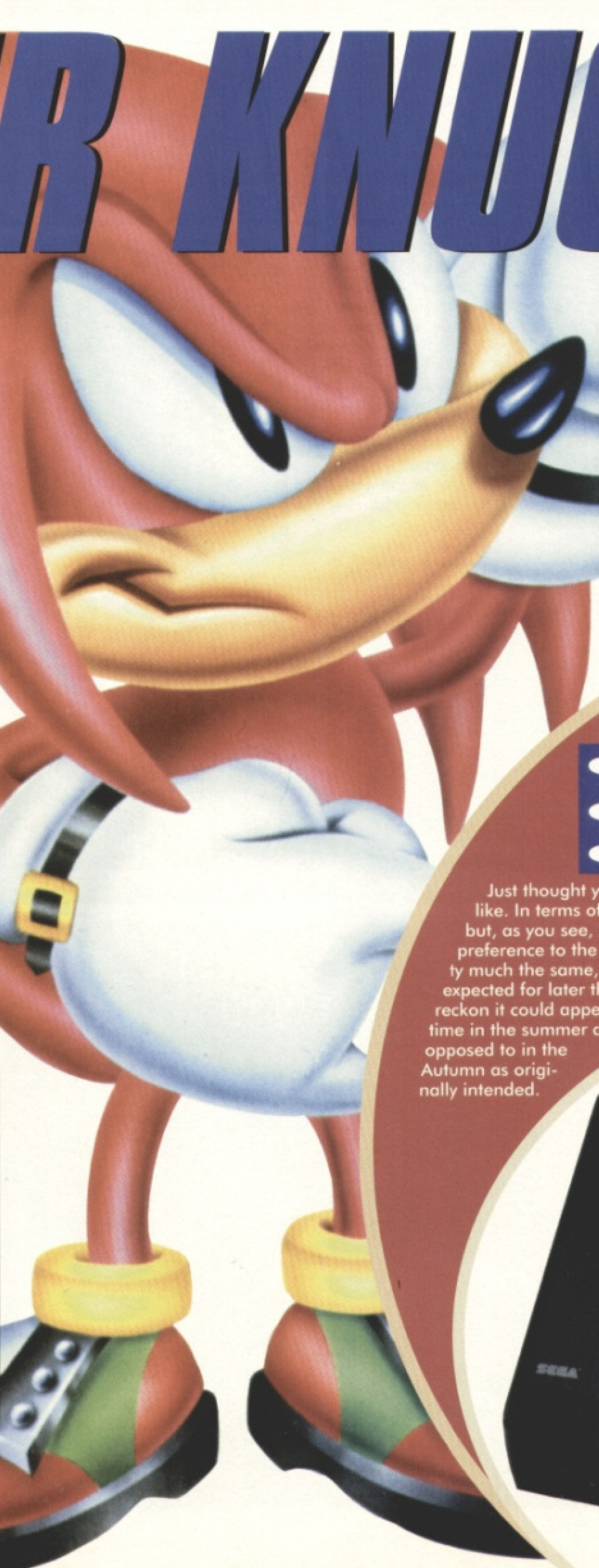


It's certainly novel, but Sega were concerned that it may prove too challenging for some. This is one area where months of playtesting will be ordered. Elsewhere, there are some great bonus games, that put the interludes in Sonic 3 and Sonic and Knuckles to shame. One is a fantastic free-fall through a tube filled with bonus and warp tiles, in a myriad of colours. The second we have seen involves a 3D polygon tube, with changing gravity and inertia effects. Even at this early stage Knuckles has some funky styling: arty intros to each level. As more material becomes available on the game, don't doubt us to have it first.



NEWS

ER KNUCKLES

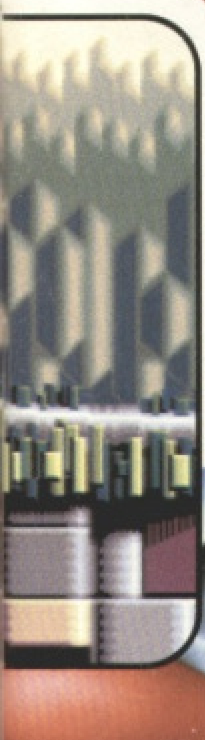




UK SATURN UNVEILED

- **NEW MACHINE**
- **BY SEGA**
- **SATURN**

Just thought you'd like to have a look at what a UK PAL Saturn will look like. In terms of size and proportion it's identical to the import machines but, as you see, Sega Europe have opted for a typically black casing in preference to the grey of the Jap original. Around the back things stay pretty much the same, too, with the addition of an AV port. The machine is still expected for later this year, but we reckon it could appear some time in the summer as opposed to in the Autumn as originally intended.



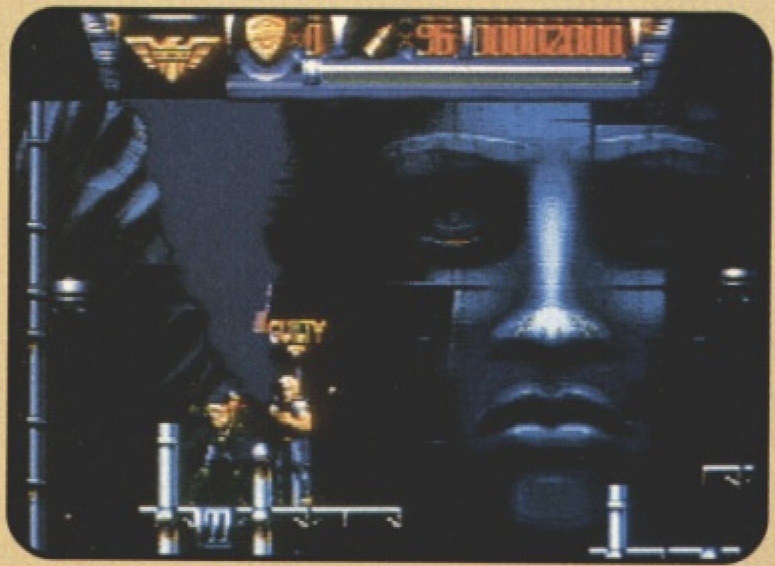


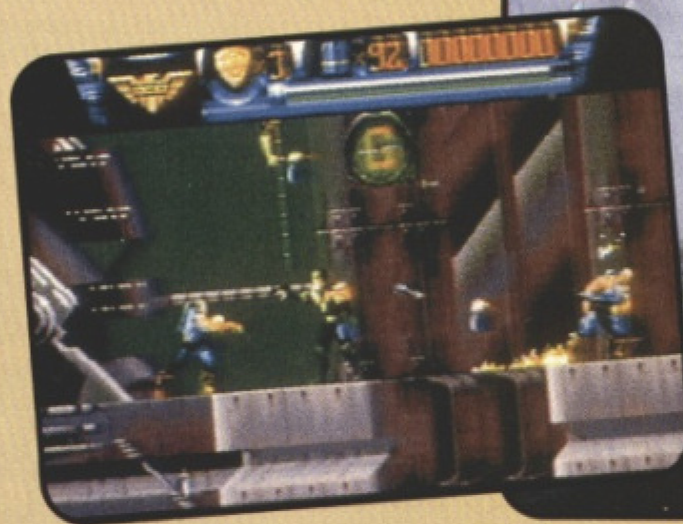
DREDD - FIRST

- NEW GAME
- BY ACCLAIM
- MEGADRIVE

The first contender for 'Licence Of The Year' definitely goes to Acclaim's Judge Dredd and here are the first pictures you'll see of the game! A mixture of platform and shoot 'em up genres, Dredd is a twelve-stage game which mixes ideas lifted from both the forthcoming film and the comics. The film itself revolves around Dredd's attempts to stop his clone borther Rico from cloning himself and creating an army of psychopaths, and the game charts his progress, offering loads of extra perps to judge on the way. Probe are the guys behind the game, and in addition to the platform action they have also added a series of 3D stages where Dredd jumps on his Lawmaster bike and cruises the streets of Mega-City One. An EXCLUSIVE preview of the game is imminent, so get ready to leap into the 22nd century for the full works on this exciting licence.

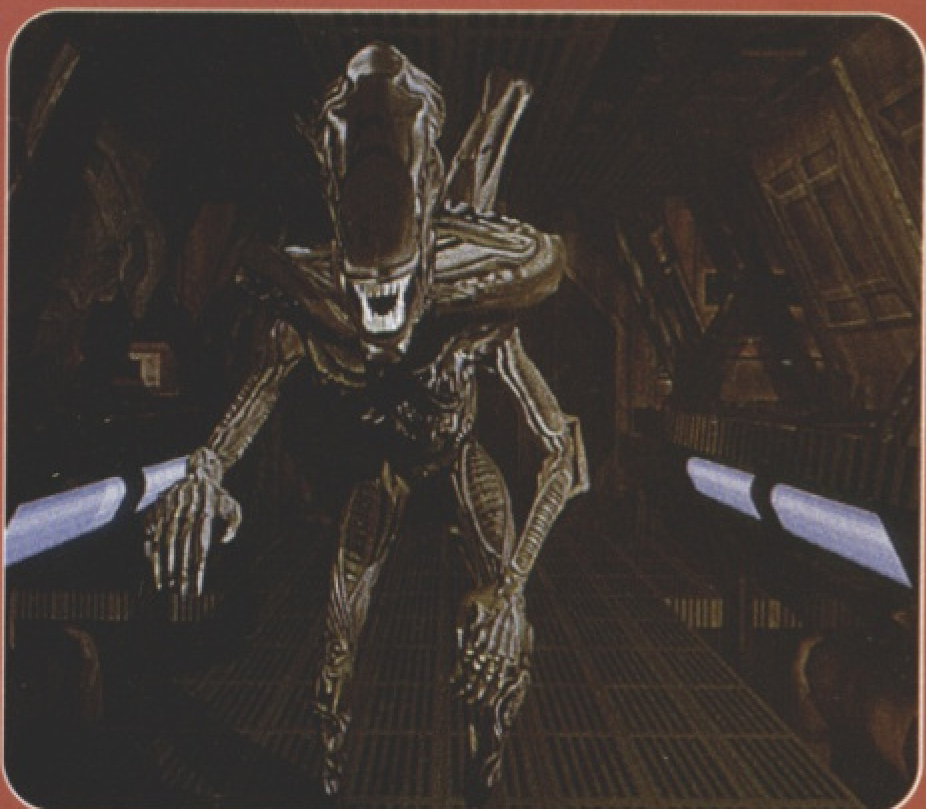






ALIEN NATION

- NEW GAME
- BY ACCLAIM
- SATURN



You may remember the first pics of Acclaim's Alien Trilogy we published a few months back. Well, here's the latest to appear along with more news on this stunning-looking game. Alien Trilogy is now set to hit the Saturn in time for the machine's UK release date and is an eighteen-stage 3D blast with the player going to war against the acid-blooded monsters in a hunt for the Queen alien. The game is the first to be released that has used Acclaim's 'motion capture technology', and the graphics truly do justice to the classic movie trilogy with loads of dark corridors and surprise attacks. Acclaim are chuffed to bits with the game so far, and it certainly looks to live up to their expectations — a Doom variant has never looked so detailed. Sadly, a 32X version is no longer on the cards, but we'll be watching this one closer than a kid juggling hot coals whilst standing on our new carpet.

LOOK!



INTERCLAY RETURN

- NEW GAME
- BY INTERPLAY
- 32X

Interplay continue their Sega assault and unveil the first screenshot of their 32X conversion of Clayfighter 2. Whilst the first game came in for a bit of a kicking, the sequel sports more characters, moves and the like, it is also believed that the plug-thru's extra processing power will make the game faster to play than the sluggish original. The Super NES game has done quite well for itself on the review circuit, and we'll be getting out sticky mitts on this one any time now.



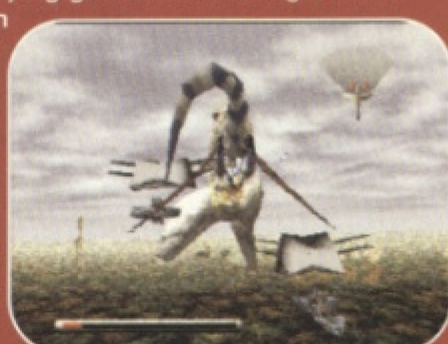
BREATH OF FIRE

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- SATURN

Panzer Dragoon is probably the most important Saturn release of 1995. Since early shots of the game appeared, critics have latched onto a game which will crucially define the Saturn's powers. At its most basic level, Panzer Dragoon is a flight of fancy. You control the firing and limited movement of a flying dragon, making its way through multiple levels. It's possible to view the game from four viewpoints: front, two flanks and rear.



All the graphics are polygon-generated, with detail, colouring and depth that makes Virtua Fighter look pathetic. When we played the game there were two complete levels. One was a flight through a desert, with huge Dune-like worms rearing out of the sand. This was followed by a flight over a dense forest, with fantastical flying galleons attacking from all sides. As you can see, from what we've played, we have high hopes for Panzer Dragoon. More news of the official released version very soon.



OCEAN'S WATERWORLD

- NEW GAME
- BY OCEAN
- SATURN/32X

It has fallen to Ocean to snap up the next contender for 'film of the year.' Waterworld, a cross between 'The Man From Atlantis' and 'Die Hard' stars Kevin Costner as a sort of police sheriff with gills who inhabits a world flooded following the loss of the polar caps, and under seige from Dennis Hopper and his pirate mates. Ocean's game is set to appear on a variety of 32bit platforms, Saturn and 32X included, but firm details regarding its content and style are unknown. Still, if the game goes smoother than the film's which (which is said to be milions over budget), we should see it later this year.



YOU DON'T SAY...

Psst! Over here... Quickly. There's not much time...

Let's start with joyous news on the sequel front. The busy Bitmaps are working away on a sequel to The **Chaos Engine**. Once again you have been drawn back into the Victorian era where an invasion force of alien miscreants are wreaking havoc, and your task (should you accept it, etc, etc) is to blow the beggars to bits. Whilsat the graphics retain the weird 'Steam/Cyberpunk' look, new additions are an interactive 3D play area, more power ups and, most notably, a split-screen mode for the two-player game. Just don't say we told you.

One of those talkative little Starlings tells us that EA's first venture into the wonderful world of 32X will be an update of the **NHL** games. Quite what they intend to do with it I'm not sure, but needless to say we'll find out imminently as will you.

Looking into our crystal ball we are strangely drawn to Virgin who are going a little Mega-CD mental. Between February and April they have TWELVE title lined up, ranging from JVC's **KEIO Squadron** and **Dungeon Master II**. What's more interesting, though, are the as-yet seen titles, **Cobra II**, **Lords Of Thunder** and **Flux**. More when we get it. Oh yeah, we couldn't help but notice that **Demolition Man CD** is back on the cards, too. Yeah, right.

Strangest movie licence aquisition of the CES must go to Acclaim. Several years ago, Julian Sands made a movie called **Warlock** with the girl who played the cello in Fame (ask yer sister). There was also a sequel which went straight to video a few months back. Anyway, Acclaim are working on a Warlock game which takes the form of a platformer. No other info at the mo, though, but we reckon an Acclaim game based on 1970s horror 'And Now The Screaming Starts' must be a cert.

On a sadder note, Accolade's UK offices have been closed as Time Warner have stepped in to buy all their games and the label. Similarly, Domark's console games will now be appearing through Acclaim, including the return of the once-dead **Wizard Pinball** for the Game Gear.

'Til next month,
Pip pip...

MAGNIFICENT MEN IN THEIR FLYING MACHINES



- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- 32X

Just in from Japan is news of an imminent conversion of the latest arcade smash Wing War for none other than the 32X. Based on warplanes from both past and present, the flying machines of nine nationalities — among them, Japan, United States, and Great Britain — are up for missions across the globe. Using the 32X's twin Hitachi processors, Wing War is set to push the plug-through to its full potential.

IZZY WIZZY

- NEW GAME
- BY US GOLD
- 32X

US Gold have again stepped into the frame to snap up the licence for the next Olympics. However, whilst the atlanta-based tournament isn't due to start until 1996, the Brummie lads and lasses are set to introduce the games' mascot, Izzy, in a 16MEG platformer. Izzy's Olympic Quest stars a little morphing athlete capable of great turns of speed and the ability to turn into sports equipment. His task involves recovering the five Olympic rings which some rotten sod has stolen (I bet it was the French). Three levels split into smaller sub-stages await our hero, and if he succeeds he gets to take part in the games. Izzy will be appearing later this year, but nobody's quite sure when.





BLACKTHORNE ARRIVES

- NEW GAME
- BY INTERPLAY
- 32X

When the planet Tuul was overrun by Sarlac, ad bad guy out to snatch control of the planet, only one man was brave enough to take him on: Kyle Blackthorne. Kyle's first adventure has just taken part on the Super NES in the form of Interplay's Flashback-inspired Blackthorne, and it is currently undergoing conversion to the 32X, with the obligatory better graphics and sound. A platformer, Kyle wanders from screen to screen offing bad guys and searching for the two crystals needed to restore balance and kill Sarlac. Andy on NMS really rates this, and we can find out if he's lying reet soon.





RETURN OF THE SONY COMPO!

- COMPO
- BY SONY

Oops, not that we're stupid or owt, but two months ago we said 'here are the first three questions in our two-part Sony compo, the next three will appear the following issue.' Sadly, due to a hiccup (more of a bloody great burp, really), they never. Well, fear not, because we are repeating the first three questions and the new three so, at long last, you can have a pop at winning a Sony MiniDisc player and loads of game-related goodie bags, including copies of Mighty Max, Pitfall, and Mickey Mania. So, here in full are the six questions which could win you that rather smart piece of kit or one of the five runners-up prizes of packs of games, and five smaler bags of assorted Sony goodies.

1. Name the acrobatic star of Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure:
A. Harry
B. Max
C. Keith

2. Which famous studio gave birth to Mickey Mouse?
A. Fox
B. Columbia
C. Disney

3. Name Mickey Mouse's trusty pooch?
A. Remus
B. Pluto
C. Dougal

4. Is Mighty Max:
A. Tiny
B. Gert fat
C. Tall

5. Which Sony game was based on a Stallone film?
A. Mickey Mania
B. Cliffhanger
C. Sensible Soccer

6. Pitfall first appeared on which console?
A. Vectrex
B. Colecovision
C. Atari VCS

Now scribble your answers on to the back of a sealed envelope or postcard and send it to:

BELATED MINI-DISC TOMFOOLERY COMPO,
MEAN MACHINES SEGA,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU

Make sure they get here by Feb 28th or Gus will eat them. Usual tyrannical compo rules apply.


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Once again, the bi-annual CES has come and gone, and January's Las Vegas show was a let-down to say the least. Nintendo's dire-looking VR unit was the star of an otherwise quiet show, with Sega tucked away in a small area in the corner. In terms of games it was equally dull, with only Acclaim's Judge Dredd and 32X MKII conversions and Interplay's forthcoming 32X titles looking particularly interesting. The Saturn wasn't represented at all, apart from Sega unveiling the black casing which will house the European machines, and a few mentions on press releases of games due for release next year. Still, here's what few items of interest we did cobble together.

SUNSOFT

The chaps behind Aero The Acrobat were pushing the forthcoming sequel and its spin-off, Zero The Kamikaze Squirrel, whilst also unveiling a Megadrive version of their Final Fight clone, The Death And Return of Superman. More impressive, though, is their 20MEG beat 'em up Justice League, which pits the likes of Superman against heroes like Batman and Wonder Woman. Whilst not particularly original, large sprites make this a smart-looking scrap.



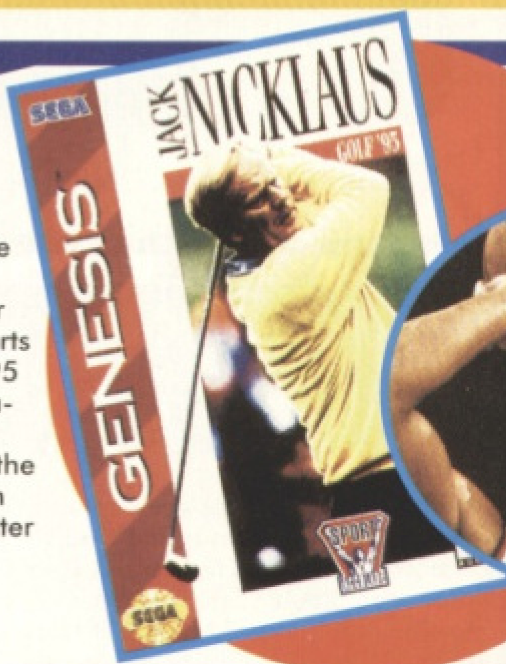
Superman (after death).



Justice League packs a punch.

ACCOLADE

The sell-out of Accolade Europe's titles to Time Warner in the UK means the following will appear through the chaps behind Lawnmower Man and Generations Lost later this year. Sports fans can look forward to Jack Nicklaus Golf '95 and a sequel to Barkley: Shut Up And Jam featuring more players and courts. However, although not on show, the hottest news from the Accolade camp was of Zero Tolerance II which will be debuting on the 32X and Megadrive later this year. Oh, and Bubsy is set to return for a third outing in a game programmed by Fareham-based Climax. Oh joy.





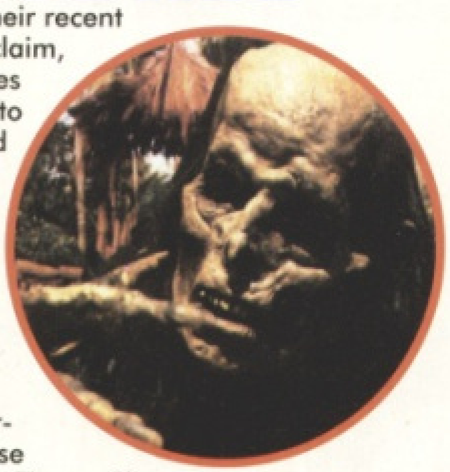
OCEAN

New to the Megadrive, Ocean were showing off their main licences which took the shape of The Flintstones and Addams Family Values, both of which were originally due to be handled by Sony. Both are roughly 70% complete now and lining up for a Spring release, whilst their third title, Mighty Max, has already been released. There was no news of Saturn or 32X projects, but we're promised there'll be something to see later — no doubt their licence of Kevin Costner's forthcoming aquatic actioner, Waterworld.



CES NEWS CES

DIGITAL PICTURES



Fresh from their recent deal with Acclaim, Digital Pictures have gone into FMV overload as they start preparing more CD titles for a variety of machines. The 32X can expect enhanced versions of Corpse Killers, Scottie Pippen Slam City and Supreme Warrior which should have clearer graphics than the poor 16bit versions, whilst the plug-thru and Mega-CD will also play host to a storyteller disc which allows the player to create their own fairy tales or watch one of a number on offer. The games will appear under the Acclaim banner a month after their US releases starting in March.

ACCLAIM

This is more like it! Sitting proudly on the Acclaim stand was Sylvester Stallone's Lawmaster bike from the forthcoming Judge Dredd film which brought more than a few gawpers to the stand for a look. The game was also on show, as were recently-announced licences such as True Lies (a little early to comment on the Megadrive version), Stargate (like Alien 3), and Warlock (hmmm). Acclaim's tie-ins with Marvel were also on display with the recently-released Wolverine flexing his Adamantium claws alongside the Spiderman TV licence (see preview this month). Oh yeah, and NFL Quarterback Club was on show in both its Megadrive and Game Gear incarnations.
One of the biggest draws of the stand, though, was the 32X conversion of Mortal Kombat II which, whilst not initially that impressive, sees the addition of larger sprites and the juggle combos missing from the Megadrive version — but, hey, why not read our full and exclusive review for all the details! However, we were a little disappointed the promised version of 32X NBA Jam: Tournament Edition wasn't on show, as this looks as if it could be a real winner. However, a 32X version of WWF Raw was announced so that should please fans of the spandex grapplers. Acclaim's new technology stuff also looked pretty smart with Alien Trilogy setting new standards and, although there was nowt to see, Batman Forever, is said to be rais-



▲ *Wow! Look, the Batman Forever logo. Wow!*

SEGA

Obviously the 32X plug-thru was the star of the show, with Sega proudly displaying Metal Head and the assorted titles you've already seen reviewed and previewed within these pages. The Megadrive was represented by The Adventures Of Batman And Robin which looks better ever time we see it, and they were also showing off the black Saturn to the lucky few. Sega's US Sports label has been bolstered by new basketball and baseball games, but the only other new game to speak of was Comix Zone — a colourful-looking beat'em up set with the pages of a comic strip which shows more originality than most of the genre. Finally, it was announced that the Game Gear will also be receiving a version of Batman And Robin, but when hasn't been confirmed.



ROCKET SCIENCE

With Tully Bodine and crew set to line up in a sequel to Loadstar and Cadillac And Dinosaurs ready to roll onto a Mega-CD reet soon, Rocket Science took the chance to show off a trio of Mega-CD titles and a new 32X project. First of all, meet Rocket Boy, a ray-traced hero who has inadvertently launched himself and his dog into space using a home-made spaceship. Rocket Boy and his pooch land on a weird weird planet where the normal rules of gravity don't seem to apply, and where none of the local inhabitants are in the remotest bit friendly. In all there are ten stages for our speccy hero to traverse and the game culminates in a battle against an evil tyrant. Next we have Flying Aces a biplane sim set during WWI. As rookie pilot Billy Campbell you partake in a number of attacks on the advancing Germans. Sadly, your back-up team are... well, a bit dim so much merriment and humour follows. Last, and for both the 32X and Mega-CD, we come to Darkride,



▲ *Hello, my name is Rocket Boy. My Dad used to be in Thunderbirds.*



▲ *This looks like a model someone has put a match to!*

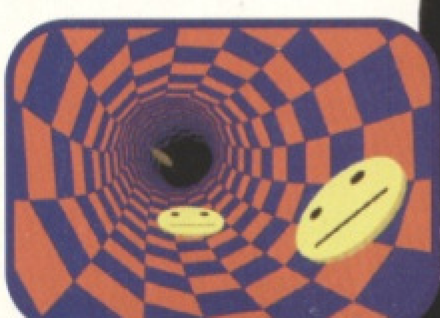






ing a few eyebrows, too. Finally, Acclaim also announced they had signed an exclusive deal with Iguana (the developers behind NBA Jam and NFL Quarterback) who will be writing solely for them now.

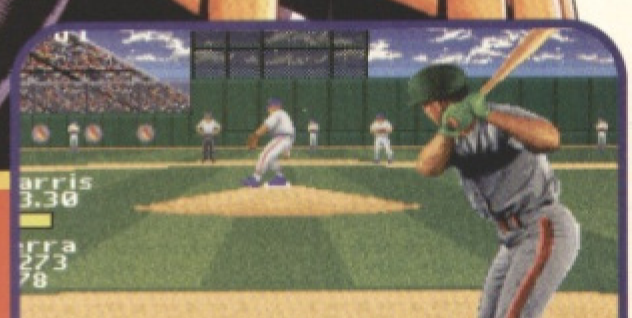
a psychedelic rollercoaster from the obviously troubled mind of games veteran Brian 'Loom/Zork' Moriarty. Twelve winding stages require your dexterity and attention in this smart-looking puzzler. Cool.



▲ ***This looks really weird, but we reckon it'll be quite smart.***

TIME WARNER

The US arm of Time Warner was displaying a Wayne Gretzky NHLPA-approved ice hockey game and a golf game endorsed by a guy called Payne Stewart, but if these appear over here it'll probably be under different names. The best news, though, was that Time Warner's first 32X game was announced — a conversion of their popular RBI Baseball game with All the latest stats and the biggest sprites seen in such a game.



▲ ***RBI — 32X style!***

THQ

THQ were using the show to unveil their forthcoming games of The Mask, seaQuest DSV, and the assorted Game Gear conversions of EA Megadrive titles. Again. Still, whilst The Mask and his ageing mates were making up for half the stand, THQ also announced a cluster of new Sega-related titles. The first is a Mega-CD conversion of the arcade sequel to Smash TV, Total Carnage. The rest, though, concentrates pretty much on the Game Gear with THQ again raiding EA's back catalogue and announcing battery-gobbling versions of Michael Jordan In The Windy City (where the basketball player battle zombies using a ball!) and NHLPA 96, another in the never-ending range of ice hockey sims.





▼ *Oj joy, another fishing game. We can't wait...*

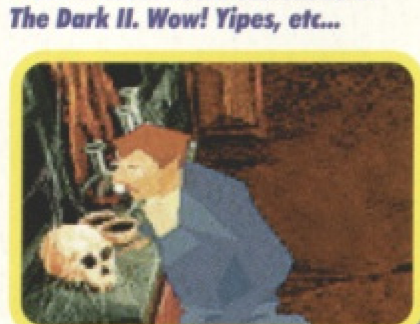


▲ *Stingray! Stingray! Da-na-na-na-na. Oops, wrong programme.*

INTERPLAY

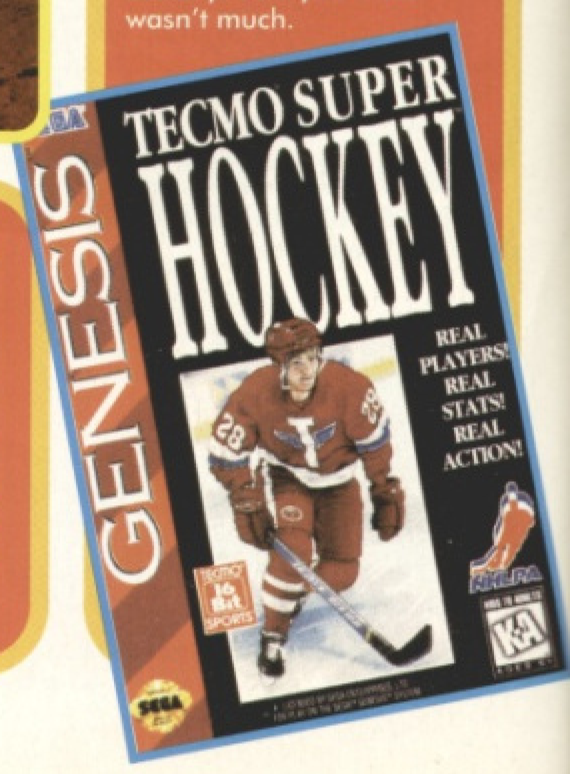
Interplay have a lot of confidence in the 32X as they are readying several new titles for release. The first are Boogerman and Clay Fighter II which we have covered earlier, and these will be followed by Blackthorne. Finally, and best of all in our less than humble opinions, is that Interplay have snapped up the 32X version of Infogrames stunning PC romp, Alone In The Dark II. We'd heard rumblings of this ages ago, but now we've seen it and it looks absolutely stunning. Inspired by the tales of HP Lovecraft (the master of all things bizarre), AITDII pits the player against an evil necromancer called Derceto who is out to take over the world. What separates Alone from other RPGs and puzzlers is the graphical style. In Alone the game's many rooms and locations are seen from a series of odd viewpoints which pan around the main sprite to add cinema-style close ups and tracking shots. These add to the atmosphere brilliantly, and we cannot wait to get to grips with it. A contender for 32X game of the year we reckon. Oh yeah, whilst we remember, Interplay have also secured the rights to release the CD version of Earthworm Jim over here. With an extra level, new endings and weapons it should hit the shelves in a month or so.

▼ *Look! Look! Look! 32X Alone In The Dark II. Wow! Yipes, etc...*



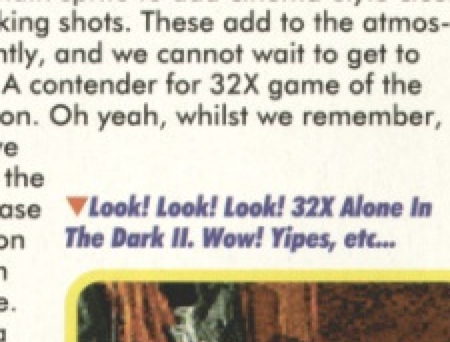
TECMO

Not a lot on show here with Super Hockey and Super Bowl II the only new releases — the latter of which will only be available in a limited edition capacity. Both are mixtures of arcade sequences with tactical screens in the assorted game breaks, but, hey, you probably knew that already. Told you there wasn't much.



HUDSONSOFT

Fresh from their Megadrive success with Bomberman, Hudsonsoft have turned their attentions to the Mega-CD with two new products forthcoming. The first is Space Adventure Cobra 2, which is a Snatcher-style adventure game with the player using a series of one-word options to solve a wealth of puzzles. Apparently Cobra is a rather smart Japanese comic, and as Virgin are releasing the game over here we'll soon find out. The second Hudsonsoft game is one mentioned in our gossip column yonks ago: Hudsonsoft's Soccer (previously Virtual Soccer II). Featuring 48 International



▲ *"Short back and sides, modom?" (Cobra 2, by the way)*

GOLDEN JOYSTICKS AWARDS 1995

EMAP Images honours the greatest achievements of the games industry annually with our glittering Golden Joysticks awards. These prized trophies are honoured by the industry more than any others - because they're the only awards that you, the readers, vote for. And the time has come once again for us to poll our readers. Simply fill in the form below and send it off to: Golden Joysticks 1995, c/o Marketing Department, EMAP Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Every entrant for the awards is automatically entered into a special prize draw, and the winner walks away with £500 worth of software for his or her machine!

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BEST CONSOLE SIMULATION
Vote for your favourite flight simulation, driving sim, sports game... the choice is yours.

BEST CONSOLE SIMULATION:

BEST LICENSED CONSOLE GAME
Which arcade conversion, officially licensed title or movie tie-in appealed to you the most in 1994?

BEST LICENSED CONSOLE GAME:

BEST ORIGINAL CONSOLE GAME
What was your favourite game of the year which DIDN'T rely on an official license?

BEST ORIGINAL CONSOLE GAME:

CONSOLE GAME OF THE YEAR
Think back... back! What was your absolute favourite game this year?

CONSOLE GAME OF THE YEAR:

HAND-HELD GAME OF THE YEAR
Hand-helds are quickly becoming a major force in the videogames market. Which game do you think was the best in 1994?

HAND-HELD GAME OF THE YEAR:

SOFTWARE HOUSE OF THE YEAR
One of our most prestigious awards. Which games producer do YOU think has maintained the greatest quality and produced the best games in 1994?

SOFTWARE HOUSE OF THE YEAR:

BEST AD OF THE YEAR
A decent marketing campaign can be the make or break of a particular game or brand. Which advert in particular stood out for you? It could be a game ad, hardware ad - on TV, radio or in the games magazines.

BEST AD OF THE YEAR:

BEST ORIGINAL CONSOLE ACTION GAME
Action games are the staple diet of most console games players. This category allows you to vote for the most original, quality game.

BEST ORIGINAL CONSOLE ACTION GAME:

CONSOLE PROGRAMMER OF THE YEAR
Programmers always used to be the unsung heroes of the console industry. This award is for you to choose who think the best programmers of 1994 are.

CONSOLE PROGRAMMER OF THE YEAR:

PRIZE DRAW FORM

Name:..

Address:...

Telephone Number: ....

Machine Owned: ....

1-2 PLAYERS	24 MEG
GAME TYPE	BEAT EM UP
PRICE	£59.95
BY	ACCLAIM
RELEASE	MARCH

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: PLENTY, TA
SKILL LEVELS: 5
RESPONSIVENESS: FAST
GAME DIFFICULTY: AVE

1ST DAY SCORE

REACH KINTARO

ORIGIN

NO! You may indeed be a regular reader of MMS, but I am not reiterating this bit, Mr Sega-Owner. NO!

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM

Look, I am not going to do it, Ok. If you can't guess by looking at the pics, you're beyond help.

MORTAL

(To the tune of 'High On The Hill' from The Sound Of Music:)

High on a mountain a lonely tyrant (ladee-hoo, a ladee-hoo, a ladee-hoo), rose up high and ordered a fight (ladee-hoo, a ladee-hoo, a-hoo). Gathering weirdoes from the Earth and his land (ladee-hoo, a ladee-hoo, a ladee-hoo), Acclaim jumped in and made several grand (ladee-hoo, a ladee-hoo, a-hoo).

With only Cosmic Carnage as competition, Acclaim have stepped in nice and early to take the 32bit beat 'em up crown with a conversion of Mortal Kombat II for the 32X. The scenario remains the same as, once more, the dozen fighters get together to take on Shao Kahn and his sidekick, Kintaro, but the game has been tinkered with in order to use the 32X's powerful processing power for a closer conversion. Fight!



▲ *Thousands came to watch Kintaro the singing mutant.*

▼ *Kitana's proposal to Rayden is spoiled by a Dolphion's sonar.*





▲ *Nope, it's no good, it just won't come off.*





▼ *Mucron would have helped cure that.*



▶ *The old 'Doing My Shoelace' gag fools Jax...*



SOUND, MATE

Fans of the original coin-op's sound will no doubt be chuffed to learn that the music is better than before and the game is now littered with clear digitised speech. None of that lisping nonsense here, mateys. Whilst the music isn't particularly different from that of the 16bit game, the samples have been lifted directly from the arcade machine and have been allocated more memory than was previously available to add clarity. Kahn has never sounded so good...



▲ ...Here's my handle, here's my spout. Tip me up and pour me out...

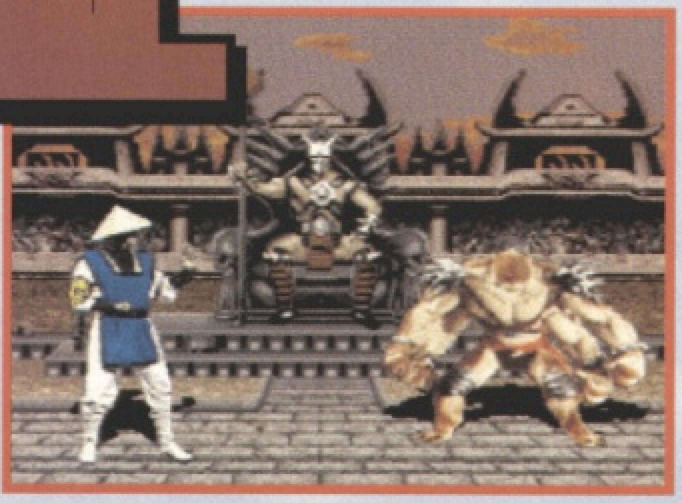


▲ The dangers of pubic barbers revealed in full.

MEGA GAME

KOMBAT





NEW, IMPROVED...

Ok, so what's so different then? Well, in all honesty, at first MKII 32X doesn't look particularly different. However, after a while, little touches become more apparent — although it isn't until you look at this version and then look at the Megadrive game that you realise just how much things have been tinkered with. The main additions are a new front end ported over from the coin-op and missing from all home versions, and more colours throughout. Probe have also made use of an expanded palette to add more colour to the action, and have replaced most of the animation frames omitted from the Megadrive game — even the Toasty! Gonk is in colour now!



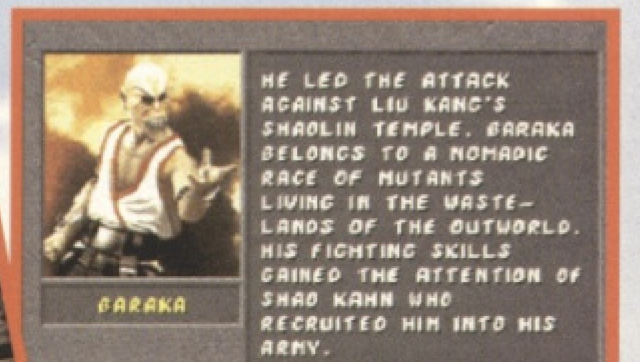
▲ Rayden demonstrates his new projectile turd Fatality. Plop!



▲ "Have you ever wondered if wer're the same sprite in different colours?"

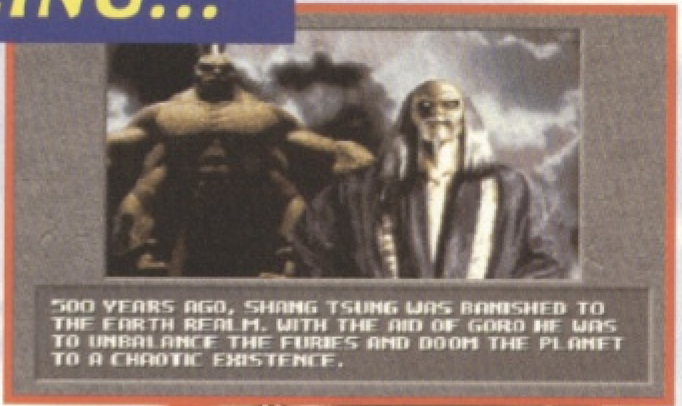


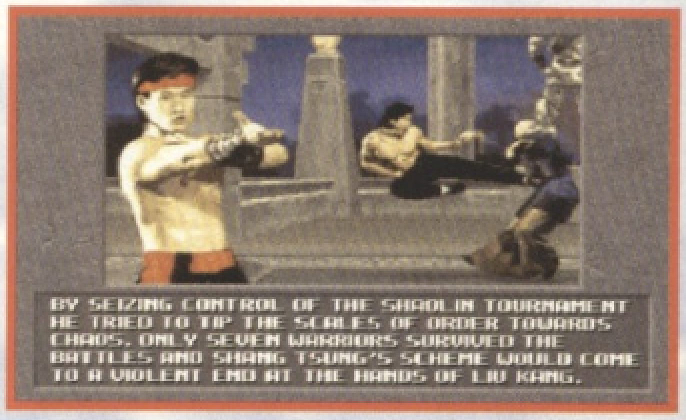


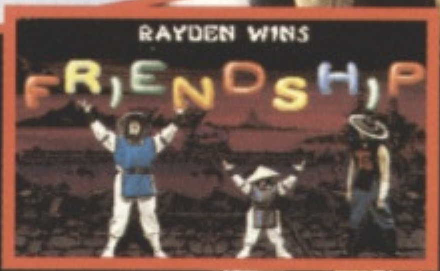


INTRODUCING...

Taking advantage of the extra memory available to them, Probe have included the intro sequence missing from the Megadrive game. Thus, for your entertainment, we are proud to present it in its entirety:









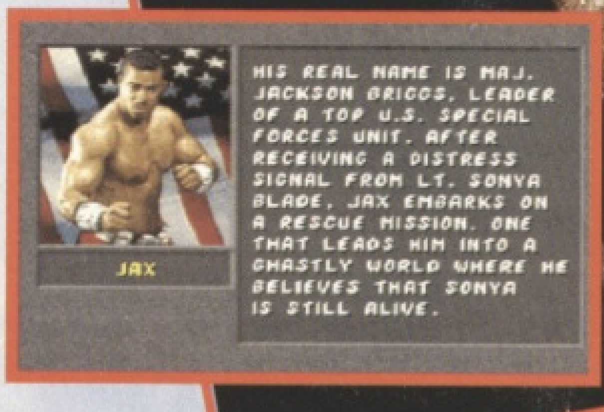


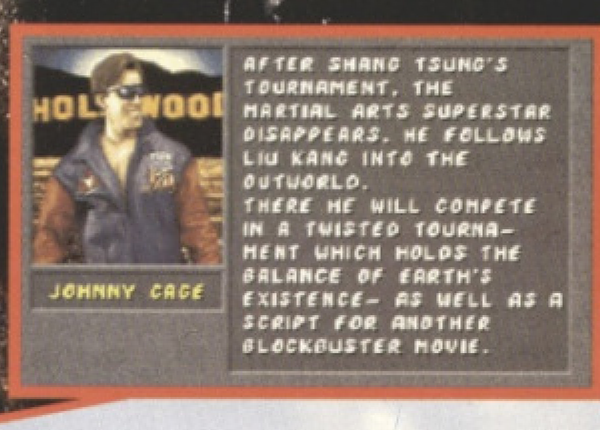
BARE NECESSITIES

In case you hadn't noticed, Mortal Kombat II was THE biggest game of 1994. A sequel to the dull Midway original, MKII featured more characters, more moves, and more detailed sprites and backdrops than before. The basic one-on-one scrap within a time-limit remained, but everything else was far removed. MKII also boasted an enlarged variety of Fatalities (the only interesting point of the original) with which to torment your foes. Similarly, if violent gore isn't your thing, the game also featured Babalities and Friendship moves which reduced your victim to a toddler or offered a peace offering. But you knew that didn't you? Can I go now?

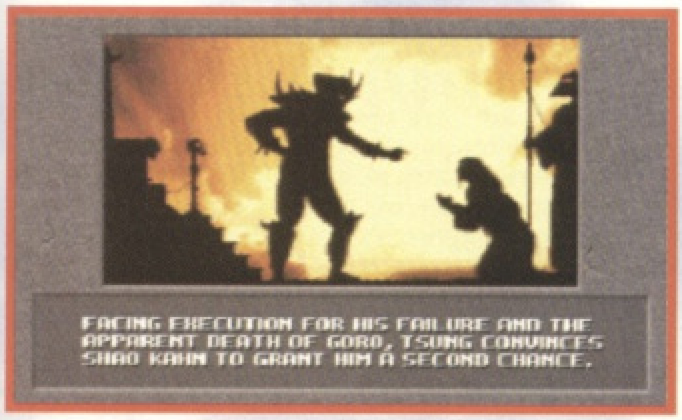
▼ *Little does Jax know, but there's a turd in it.*





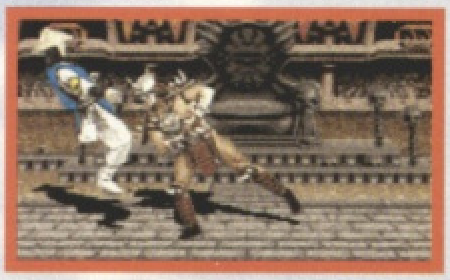










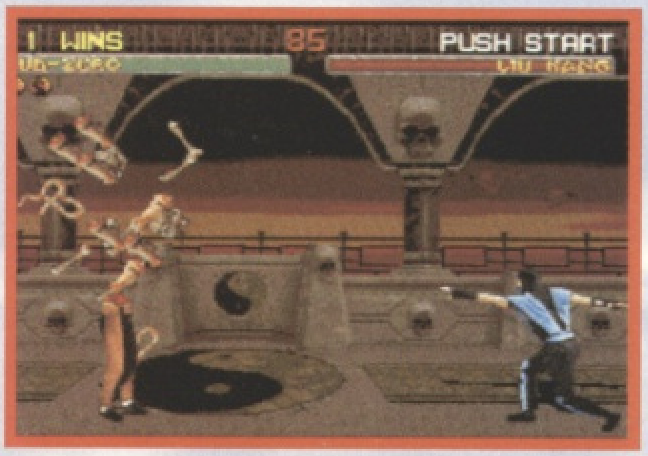






▲"Don't look at that up there you ungrateful sod..."

▼ A scene from 'The Two Ronnies', circa 1978.







▲ Rayden's Mum does a handstand (not pictured).



COMMENT



GUS

Mortal Kombat II on the Megadrive was a stupendous game, really taking the machine into areas where it should not be able to go. But some of our more petulant readers rang in with complaints about the most minor ommisions and details. Well this 32X version is especially for you, with love, from Acclaim. The graphics are as crisp as any home TV can give justice to, with a fluidity of animation that was slightly lacking from the 16bit version. The sound is also much clearer, and the added groans and speech go someway to adding atmosphere. I am a little disappointed that some of the more exciting enhancements rumoured for the conversion, Animalities among them, have not appeared. But this is still great, and if you missed out on MKII to get a 32X at crimbo, this is your chance to make amends.



KUNG LAO

A FORMER SHAOLIN MONK AND MEMBER OF THE WHITE LOTUS SOCIETY, HE IS THE LAST DESCENDANT OF THE GREAT KUNG LAO WHO WAS DEFEATED BY GORO 500 YEARS AGO. REALIZING THE DANGER OF THE OUTWORLD MENACE HE JOINS LIU KANG IN ENTERING SHAO KAHN'S CONTEST.



LIU KANG

AFTER WINNING THE SHAOLIN TOURNAMENT FROM SHANG TSUNG'S CLUTCHES KANG RETURNS TO HIS TEMPLES. HE DISCOVERS HIS SACRED HOME IN RUINS, HIS SHAOLIN BROTHERS KILLED IN A VICIOUS BATTLE WITH A HORDE OF OUTWORLD WARRIORS. NOW HE TRAVELS INTO THE DARK REALM TO SEEK REVENGE.



MILEENA

SERVING AS AN ASSASSIN ALONG WITH HER TWIN SISTER KITANA, MILEENA'S DAZZLING APPEARANCE CONCEALS HER HIDEOUS INTENTIONS. AT SHAO KAHN'S REQUEST SHE IS ASKED TO WATCH FOR HER TWIN'S SUSPECTED DISSENSION. SHE MUST PUT A STOP TO IT AT ANY COST.

COMMENT



STEVE

I have to say that my first impressions of 32X MKII weren't that favourable. There was I expecting an arcade-perfect conversion with towering sprites and crystal-clear speech, and what appeared was something that didn't look that different from the Megadrive game. Thankfully, the disappointment didn't last long, as it is only when you hold the 16bit game next to the 32X conversion that the differences become apparent — a testament to the closeness of the original! In terms of graphics, the sprites are larger, more colours have been used and the backdrops boast more detail; whilst sound is clearer with crisp samples and music. The gameplay is identical to that of the Megadrive version in terms of content and, whilst not as fast as the Super NES version, is a little pacier than the 16bit game. In summing up, 32X Mortal Kombat II is as good a conversion as could have been expected. The differences may not be massive, but they do make for a smoother game and with playability a little faster than that of the Megadrive game this is a conversion improved in all respects. It ain't arcade perfect, but it's the best you're likely to get, and 32X owners needed a decent game after the recent drought. That being the case, Acclaim and Probe have certainly come up trumps with this.

JUGGLE COMBOS GALORE!

The most obvious addition and keeping this conversion extremely close to the coin-op are the 'Juggle Combos.' Fans of the coin-op were no doubt rather miffed when they realised the Megadrive game didn't allow them to piece together a series of moves to wipe out their opponents. Each character is capable of a variety of differing combos which can remove up to two-thirds of your foe's energy — our fave being Rayden's jump/Torpedo combo which is effected by standing as close as possible, hitting them so they fly into the air, before puling off one torpedo move, followed by another which hits them as they start to fall again!



MY, HOW YOU'VE GROWN

We've written so much about MKII in the past that we're starting to run out of ways to enthuse about it. As such, we thought we'd let its improved graphics speak for themselves. Shown here are a number of 32X shots set next to simi-

32X









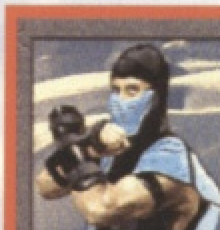
RAYDEN

WATCHING EVENTS UNFOLD FROM HIGH ABOVE, THE THUNDER GOD REALIZES THE GRIM INTENTIONS OF SHAO KAHN. AFTER WARNING THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE SHAOLIN TOURNAMENT, RAYDEN SOON DISAPPEARS. HE IS BELIEVED TO HAVE VENTURED INTO THE OUTWORLD ALONE.



SCORPION

THE HELL-SPAWNED SPECTER RISES FROM THE PITS. AFTER LEARNING OF SUB-ZERO'S RETURN, HE AGAIN STALKS THE NINJA ASSASSIN—FOLLOWING HIM INTO THE DARK REALM OF THE OUTWORLD WHERE HE CONTINUES HIS OWN UNHOLY MISSION.



SUB-ZERO

THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THE SHAOLIN TOURNAMENT, SUB-ZERO MYSTERIOUSLY RETURNS. IT IS BELIEVED HE TRAVELLED INTO THE OUTWORLD TO AGAIN ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE SHANG TSUNG. TO DO SO HE MUST FIGHT HIS WAY THROUGH SHAO KAHN'S TOURNAMENT.

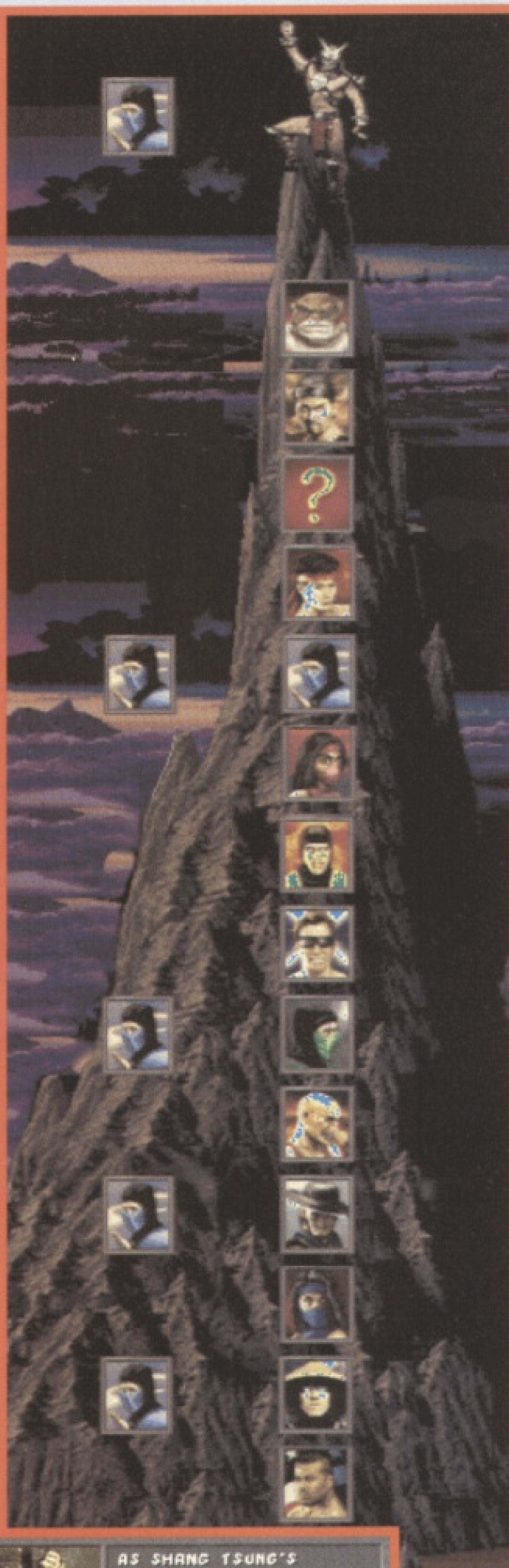
lar Megadrive ones. See, there's quite a lot of difference: each character's name has got a new tint, for example. You'll also notice that the fighters are considerably taller this time round, and are nearly a third taller than they used to be, whilst the backdrops feature more detail — with more animation used to replace small touches from the arcade game, including a fleet of flying monks next to the entry portal.

MEGADRIVE









▲ I'd like to see The Shamen move that bloody mountain!



SHANG TSUNG

AFTER LOSING CONTROL OF THE SHAOLIN TOURNAMENT, TSUNG PROMISES HIS RULER SHAO KAHN TO SHAPE EVENTS THAT WILL LURE THE EARTH WARRIORS TO COMPETE IN HIS OWN CONTEST. CONVINCED OF THIS PLAN, SHAO KAHN RESTORES TSUNG'S YOUTH AND ALLOWS HIM TO LIVE.



REPTILE

AS SHANG TSUNG'S PERSONAL PROTECTOR THE ELUSIVE REPTILE LURKS IN THE SHADOWS STOPPING ALL THOSE WHO WOULD DO HIS MASTER HARM. HIS HUMAN FORM IS BELIEVED TO DISGUISE A HORRID REPTILIAN CREATURE WHOSE RACE WAS THOUGHT EXTINCT MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO.

GRAPHICS — 95

▲Large sprites which make the most of the 32X's enlarged palette. Every aspect has been tinkered with, from the backdrops to the intro.

SOUND — 93

▲The samples have been replaced and are much clearer. The intro tunes and effects are stronger, too.

PLAYABILITY — 95

▲Faster than the Megadrive game and more playable for it.
▼Not as fast as the Super NES game.

LASTABILITY — 93

▲All the options have remained the same, so there are five difficulty levels and other ways to make things tougher. A new version of the cheat's in there, too!

VFM — 90

▲The best 32X beat 'em up to date — although that's not hard!
▼ Only get it if you can sell your Megadrive version first.

OVERALL — 92

Better in all respects, and the best conversion 32X owners could hope for. Bigger, harder and kicks backsides in every department.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Addams Fam

"It's an Addams!". Ocean are rejoicing at their imminent Megadrive arrival, Addams Family Values, which has gone through a long, and sometimes difficult, labour. Gus checks out their new baby for any distinguishing marks.



It's been a year since the cinematic release of Addams Family Values, which MEAN MACHINES saw at a special preview screening courtesy of Acclaim. They helpfully provided conversions of Ocean's previous Addams Family game for the Megadrive and Game Gear, both of which turned out to be workmanlike, if uninspired platform games notable for their graphics and large playing area.

Now Ocean have taken it upon themselves to see the game to the sequel through to the shelves, part of their industrious entry into the Sega market which began with Mr Nutz at Xmas and the clutch of previews you'll find in this month's special supplement.

As much the home to the platform game as Wimpy is to the sesame seed bun, Ocean have decided to make a departure from their familiar genre and have constructed a birrova an adventure to tie-in with the second movie. Keen players of games like Landstalker and Soleil, and those lucky enough to have experienced Zelda on the Super NES and Game Boy will instantly recognise the object and puzzle related gameplay.

The programmers have attempted a religious conversion of Addams Family Values on the Super NES, with an identical game design and near-identical graphics. This has set inevitable programming challenges for Megadrive coders who are not provided with some of the custom graphics facilities found in the Super Nintendo's hardware. It doesn't seem to have been much of a problem, with the conversion looking as smooth as a Heineken Export ad at present, in the visual sense at least.

With many of the graphics designed and in place, the main work now is to piece together a huge playing area, and to redefine the gameplay for the average Sega owner. But the project is advanced enough for MEAN MACHINES to file this report, in advance of a full review within the next few months. But whatever you may read — don't try this at home.

PROJECT
ADDAMS FAMILY VALUES

PUBLISHER
OCEAN

INITIATED
AUGUST '94

RELEASE
JULY '95

FORMAT
MEGADRIVE

DEVELOPERS
IN-HOUSE.

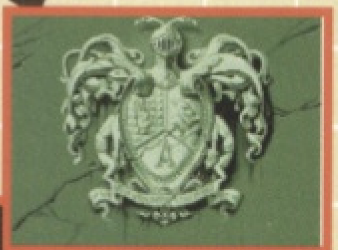








ily Values







NERYS HUGHES' WORST NIGHTMARE

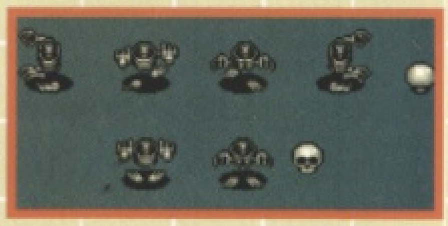
The plot of the game incorporates many of the elements of the film. Okay, not anything like all, but the film was essentially a collection of comedy set-pieces set over a lot of locations. At the heart of it is the new addition to the family, Gomez and Morticia's darling baby Pubert. They hire a nanny for the little bundle of joy, the seemingly sweet Debbie Jellinksy, who soon turns out to be the hired help from Hell. Warped Debbie kidnaps the baby, leaving a ransom demand for half the Addams' estate. Undeterred, the family go in search of the child, hidden away in their expansive mansion. During the game, you take direct control of Uncle Fester, but the game is designed for you to interact with the whole Addams clan. In fact, meeting the other Addams and using their skills is essential to getting through the game. Some of them will require items found in remote parts of the game map, which effectively means a lot of the gameplay is fetch-and-carry from location to location.



▲ ***Ocean are very fond of ice levels, so there had to be one.***









▲ ***A sprite design with a separately asnimated eye-ball composite.***

▲ ***Games of this size require hundreds of sprite frames.***



LORD OF ALL YOU SURVEY

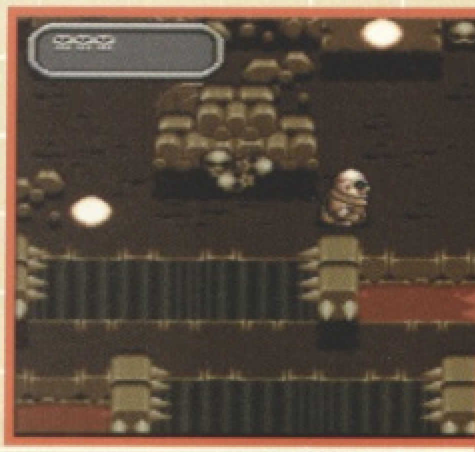
Eleven different graphic 'zones' make up the game, all of them viewed from an overhead plan perspective. To keep the game looking varied, the programmers have taken an imaginative view of just how eclectic the Addams Family estate would be. You'll find yourself walking from swampland to snowswept ice-fields; mountainous zones and English country gardens. As you'd expect, much of them game is spent in morgues and dungeons (though the appeal of a casualty dept. level was resisted). The production screenshots, show how easy it is to construct the landscapes from basic building blocks, with special features drawn specially. One obstacle for the machine is the mist and other transparent effects seen on the Super NES. New techniques have created a lot of effective imitations of these for the Megadrive, and it's likely they'll be included in some revised form.

BATTERY BACK-UP

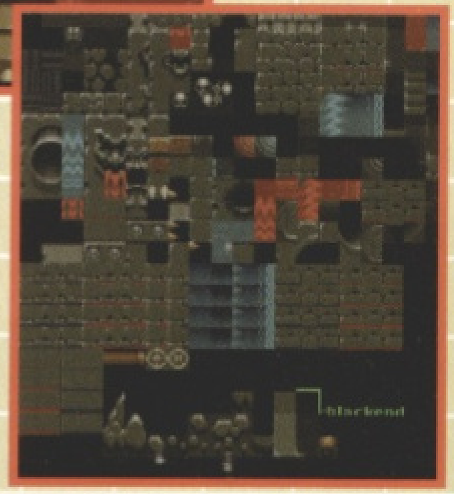
Creating a pure adventure would be dull, so Addams Family Values has been designed as an arcade/puzzle mixture. The mechanism they've found to add some shoot 'em up action is Fester's well-known love of electricity. It's come out of the laboratory and now takes the form of a zapper. There's plenty of nasty characters (Debbie's fiends) to ward off, which become more vicious as the game progresses. The zapper may be enhanced by finding further higher-powered batteries. Other weapons are available, but finding these is a matter of experimentation. In addition, lightbulbs draw from the zapper's power to create a ring of light in certain pitch-black areas of the playfield.

NERYS HUGHES' WORST NIGHTMARE

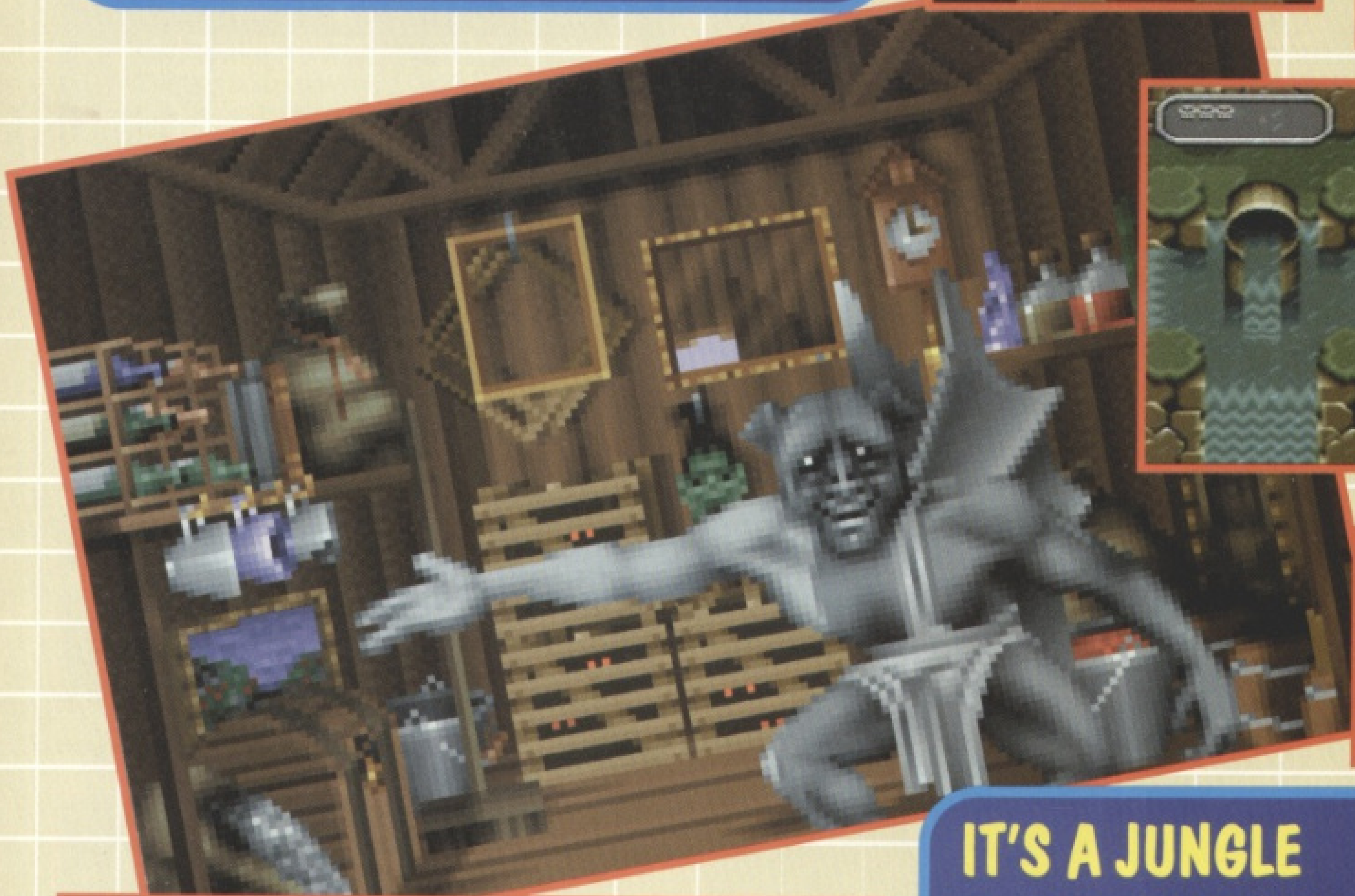
The plot of the game incorporates many of the elements of the film. Okay, not anything like all, but the film was essentially a collection of comedy set-pieces set over a lot of locations. At the heart of it is the new addition to the family, Gomez and Morticia's darling baby Pubert. They hire a nanny for the little bundle of joy, the seemingly sweet Debbie Jellinksy, who soon turns out to be the hired help from Hell. Warped Debbie kidnaps the baby, leaving a ransom demand for half the Addams'-estate. Undeterred, the family go in search of the child, hidden away in their expansive mansion. During the game, you take direct control of Uncle Fester, but the game is designed for you to interact with the whole Addams clan. In fact, meeting the other Addams and using their skills is essential to getting through the game. Some of them will require items found in remote parts of the game map, which effectively means a lot of the gameplay is fetch-and-carry from location to location.



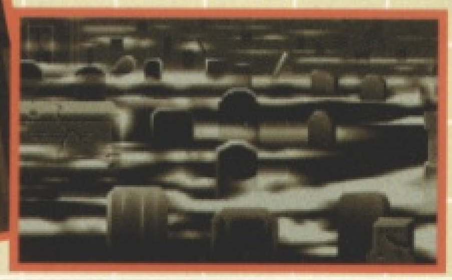
▼ *Large 'platters' of background blocks form the vasis of the maps. On the left, a finished screen.*













IT'S A JUNGLE

The biggest task in a game of this type is piecing together a solution that is not too linear, but not too confusing. The programmers were faced with giving Fester real choices, but the game has to be flexible enough to take account of these. It's is possible to make mistakes unwittingly, by taking the wrong advice or giving objects to the wrong people. You may not even be aware of it, but it makes the game tougher later on. Ocean have been sneaky by adding all sorts of characters to converse with Fester. Some of them are helpful, many misleading and more who are a bit off both. Generally you can rely on Gomez, Morticia, Wednesday and Puggsy to be of assistance. Things get a lot tougher later on, with less prompting, and solutions which are further away from their matching problems. Certainly the Megadrive conversion has been helped with a pre-designed game map and plot. The hardest graft for the game was done by that poor Super Nintendo team. Cheers, lads!

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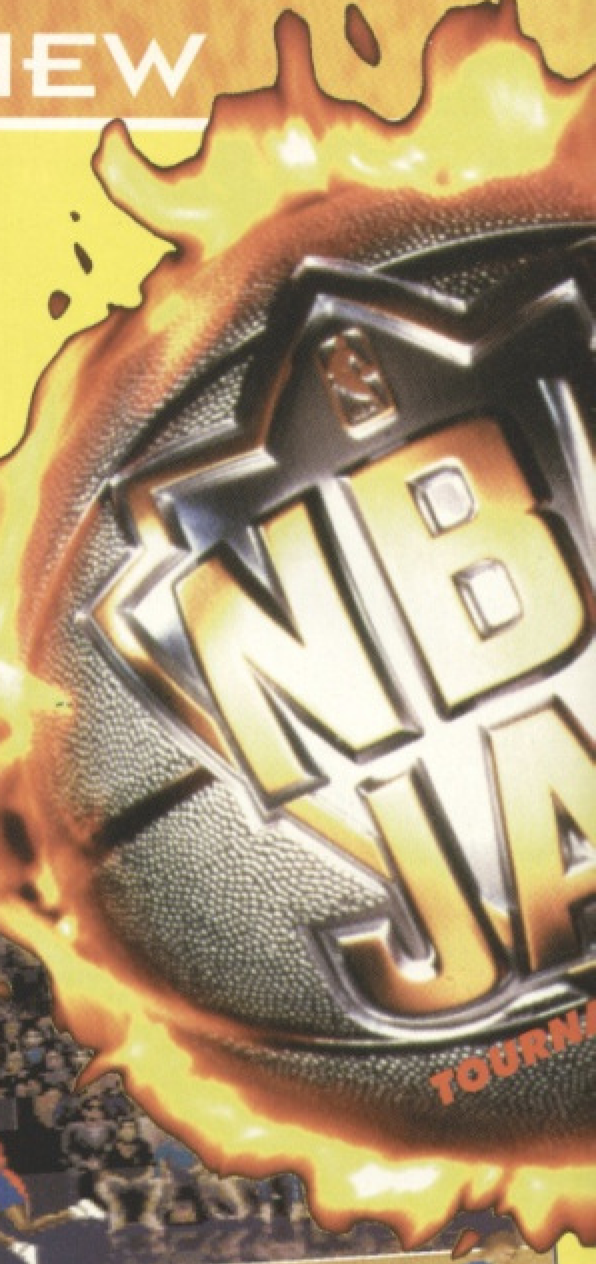
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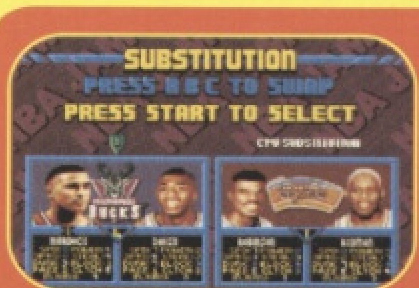
1-4 PLAYERS	RELEASE	MARCH
	BY	ACCLAIM
24 MEG	PRICE	TBA
	GAME TYPE	SPORT

PERCENT COMPLETE

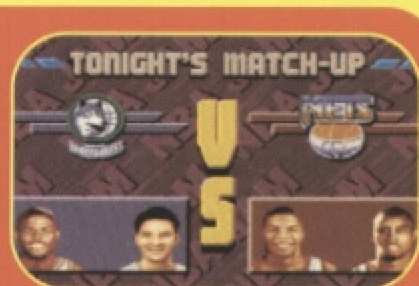
Barely has the frenzy of Megadrive basketball games died down, before it goes and blinkin' well starts up again. Not that we're complaining, mind, because this time the culprit is none other the Crown Prince of Basketball Games, the High Priest of Boom Shakalaka, the Dunkin' Daddio of the Downtown Dribblers. It's NBA Jam, folks! Only this time, it's strutting its stuff under the mysterious moniker of Tournament Edition. It can only mean one thing – in time-honoured tradition they've gone and updated the thing.

Yeh, yeh, we know what you're thinking. You've seen these updated game shenanigans before. John Madden Football, FIFA Soccer, NHL Hockey, even Pele 2 was rumoured to have surfaced (although we don't like to mention that one for fear of contracting the pox). Well, don't go casting any judgements on NBA Jam: Tournament Edition, because this one promises to be more than just another run-of-the-mill console sequel. This is actually a conversion of the four-player Tournament Edition coin-op. Oh yes.





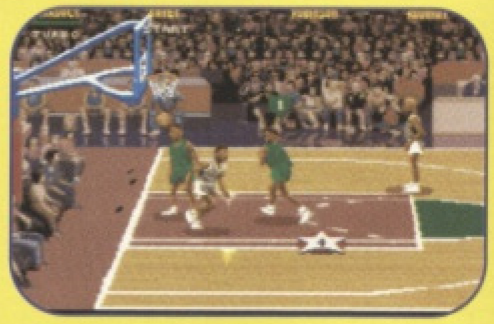
▲ *Tired legs? Hey, simply put a different player on. It's easy.*

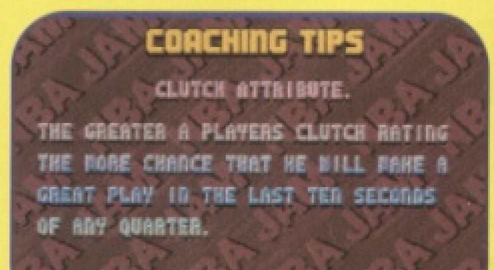


▲ *Barbara Windsor makes a surprise appearance (not pictured).*

STATS ENTERTAINMENT

Clocking in at 24MEG (the original NBA Jam was only 16MEG), Tournament Edition has certainly put its extra memory to good use. As you'd expect from an updated sports game, the teams have been revised. What's more, each team now has between three and five team members, all wit individual stats for power, blocks, steals, clutch and passing. These players can be changed around throughout the game and a good thing too, because now they all suffer from 'vigour depletion'. This basically means that the more each player gets tackled and knocked over, the more injuries they sustain and the weaker their stats get. If a player gets too badly bashed around, they end up almost useless.



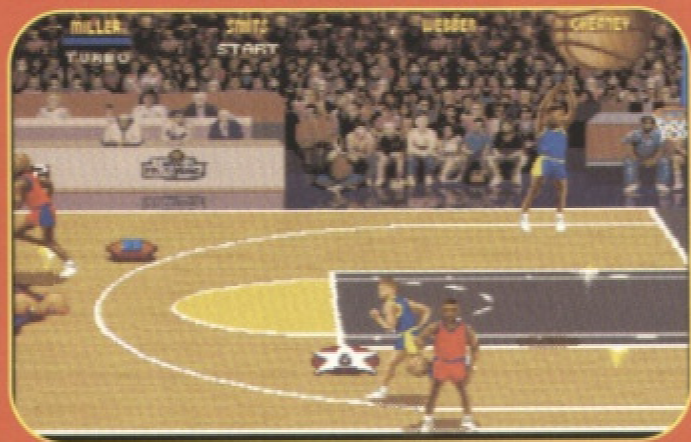






TOO HOT TO TROT!

Adding to the frenzied on-court action of NBA Jam: Tournament Edition are the all-new Hot Spots. Should one of your players pass over one of these sections of the court, just hit the shoot button to send them flying through the air before performing a super-dunk! This isn't as easy as it sounds, though, as the Hot Spots tend to move around in a somewhat random fashion. Worst still, in the coin-op they were completely invisible! Fortunately, you can make them visible – turning them into stars – in the Megadrive version. Phew.



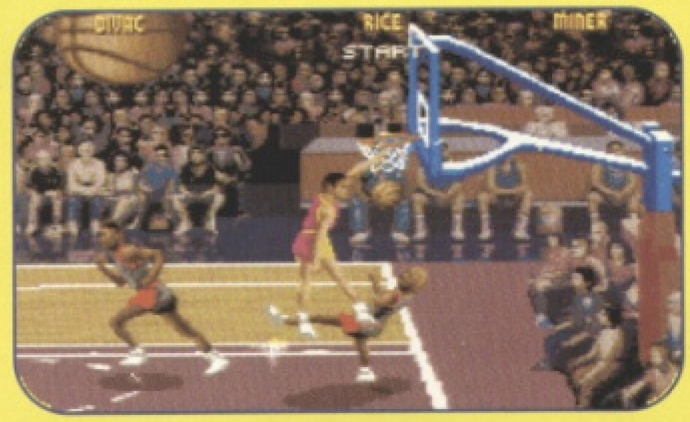


▲ *"Hey buddy, did you drop a beige lozenge with a big letter B on it?"*



▲ *The ill-fated 'limbo tackle.'*





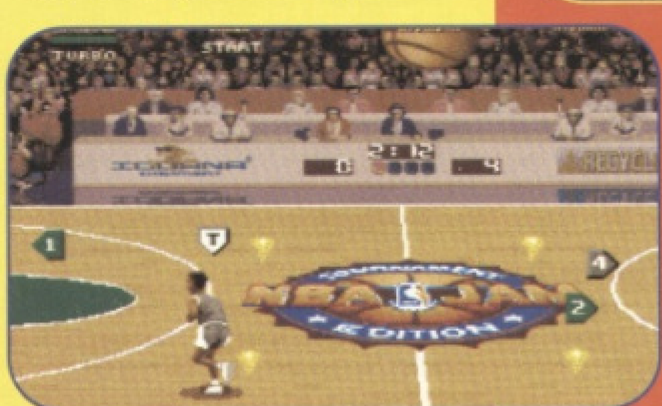


▲ *"Boom Shakala!"*
"Don't you mean Boom Shakalaka?"
" No, I read Sega Power's crap stickers."



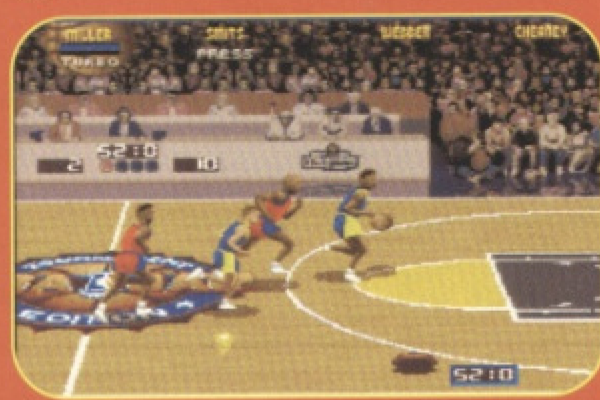
EXTRA JUICE

There's far more to this sequel than just updated teams. In fact, there's far more to the Megadrive conversion of Tournament Edition than there was to the actual coin-op — the Juice Mode for instance. Remember how this was only a cheat in the home versions of the original NBA Jam? Well now it's a fully-blown option. What's more, it's got four speed settings allowing you to race around the court at anything from a nifty trot to a full-blown gallop.



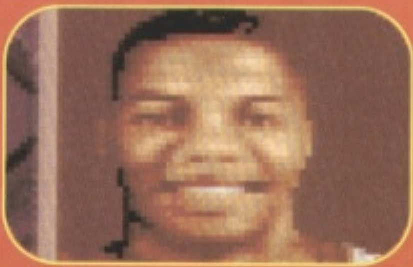


▲ *Nope, no markings on the floor here...*

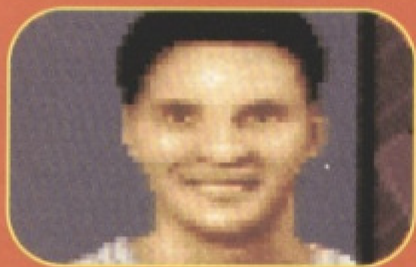


HIDE AND SEEK!

Perhaps the neatest touches of the original NBA Jam were the many hidden characters to found in the game. Well, we laugh in the face of those hidden characters. "Ptcha!" we say to them. Because Tournament Edition has a staggering 33 hidden characters. Who or what are they? Who knows? We do, actualy, but we're not telling you until the review! Exciting stuff, eh?



▲ *He's a happy chappy, but he's not a secret chappy. No no.*

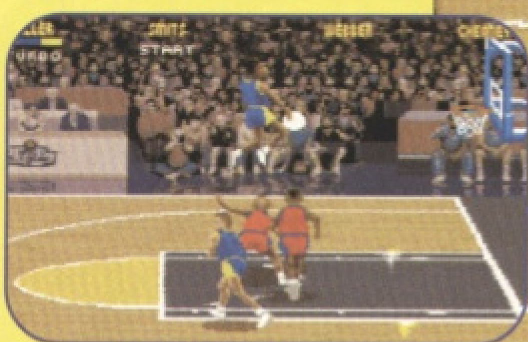


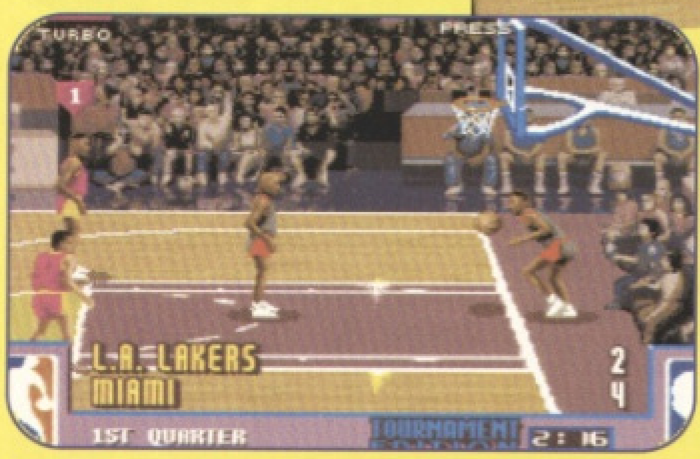
▲ *A secret character perhaps? Nope, just a scary fellow.*



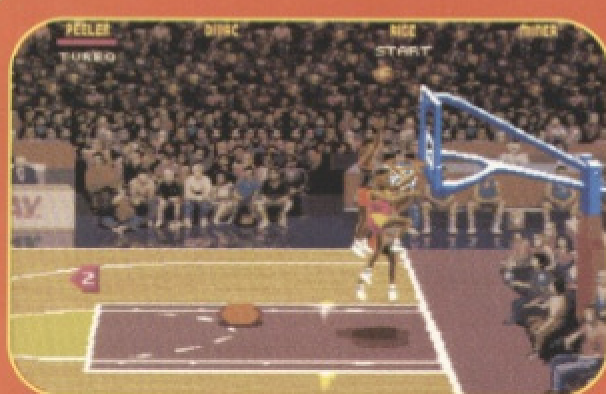








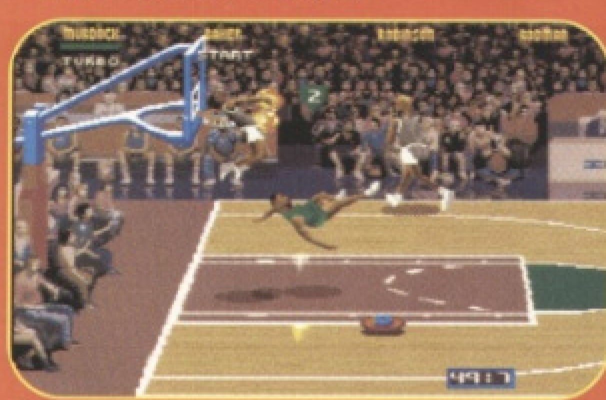


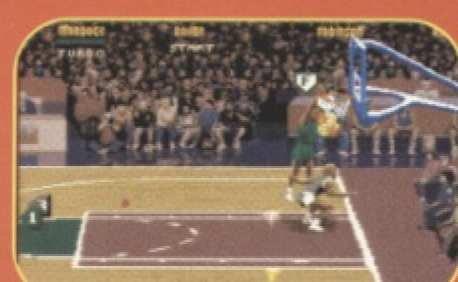


▲ *And when the music stops...*

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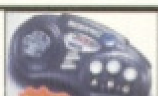
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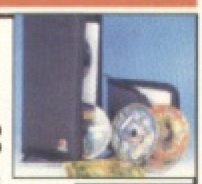
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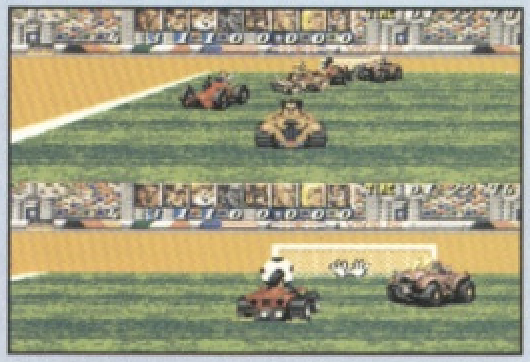
1-4 PLAYERS	
8 MEG	
RELEASE	MARCH
BY	UBI SOFT
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	RACING

PERCENT COMPLETE

STREET RACER



Christmas was cancelled at Vivid Image, the programming sweatshop behind Ubi Soft's first Megadrive release, Street Racer. Well, not quite, as supremo Mev Dinc allowed the project's coders to nip off for the odd orange juice with their families, but work on the prestige project has continued unabated from our exclusive Work in Progress two months ago.



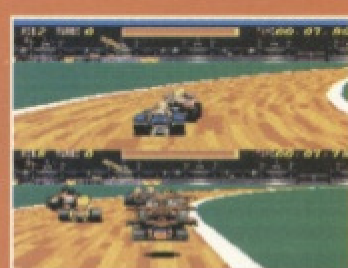
Since then, so much work has been done of the game, that Ubi Soft thought we might want to have some more exclusive pictures for the preview, as the game is nearing completion to meet its March deadline. The basic go-karting action remains true to the earlier version and that of the SNES game, which is a relief, as we've been waiting for a Mario Kart beater for the last two years. The biggest change has come in the presentation of the tracks, and the detail of the graphics.



With the first version, Vivid Image had achieved remarkable amounts of details on the tracks, the normal blank racing surfaces of games from Nigel Mansell's to Monaco GP updated with textured backgrounds and parallax scrolling. However, the discovery of a new method of graphics manipulation, perfected over the aforementioned festive season has reaped remarkable awards. The screenshots set before you, represent a Street Racer travelling at the same speed and smoothness as before, but with tons more detail. Programmer Stefan Majoram admitted to being a bit embarrassed with horizontal stripes used before on the roadside, as they are a poor driving game cliche. They have gone in favour of detailed textures that use up to 84 colours, far in excess of the expected 64 colour limit the Megadrive imposes on mere mortal programmers. Nearly all the other objectives have been reached. The game now plays in the split-screen four-player mode, and it has been possible to incorporate the playback feature that reruns the entire race, with all four players in charge of their own personal playback, from any car and two camera angles, a feature still to be added to the soccer sub-game. Ten special starts have been incorporated as have the bonus points, which are awarded for exceptional play — fastest laps, most combatitive player etc.

SWAP TWO FOR YOUR OLD...?

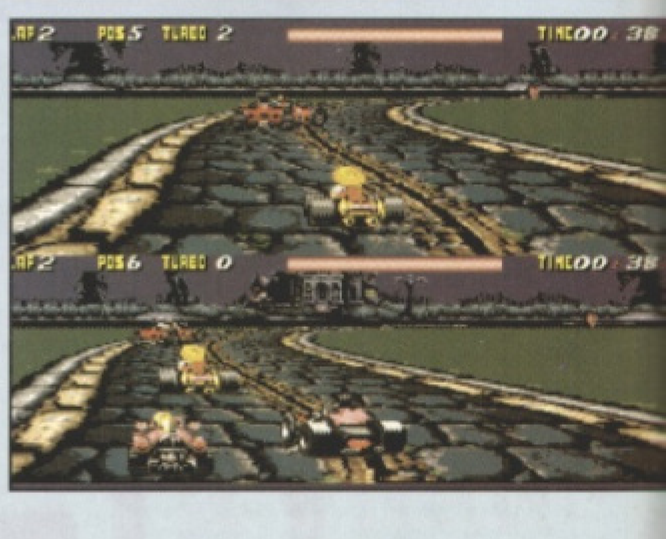
Here is a side-by-side comparison of Street Racer-as-it-was, with the new improved and rather near completion version. Pointing out the new 3D frills along the track-side is hardly required, giving a very SNES-like appearance





▲ ***Now would you swap this new screenshot for two bottles of April fresh Lenor and a bar of Vanish? No. I didn't think so madam.***









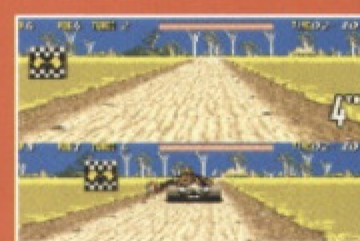




HIT ME HARDER



Of the work still to be done, much is being spent on playability and game design. When we first inspected the game, a single template track had been designed, but now all 24 are in place. Some are bizarrely structured and pretty taxing. Much time has been spent on the game's software monitoring, which increases player's speeds on corners if they're taking them well, and penalises poor play.

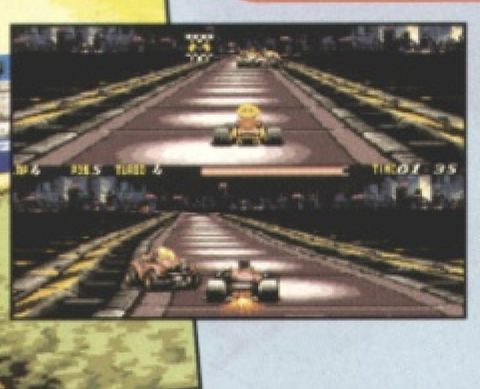


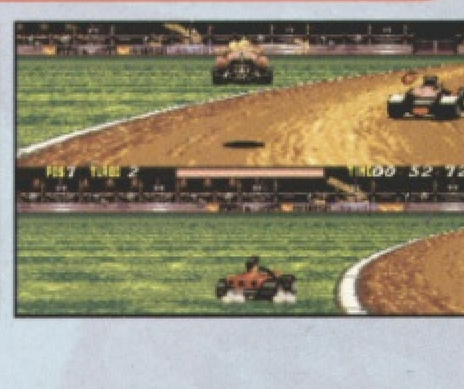
The time-delayed mines have been added to. When collected these stick to cars for a limited period before exploding, but can be passed to other players in a 'pass the parcel' tactic. At the moment the cars just spin a bit, but they're considering increasing the mine's effects to make them a real pest.

The lads have also ring-fenced the silver and gold cup races to be accessed by password only, with minimum difficulty and lap numbers set for the harder tracks. Amazingly, some memory is still left over for a few more additions as they take the programmer's fancy.









1-2 PLAYERS	
16 MEG	
RELEASE	TBA
BY	SEGA
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	PLATFORM
PERCENT COMPLETE	

X-MEN II



Forget the Power Rangers (please kids, do!). There is only one team of bendable action figures (shouldn't that be 'band of crime-fighting super heros'?) and they're the X-Men. Sega were quick to realise the potential of the Marvel comic heros with a tasty but not quite up to the mark platformer of a couple of years back. Since then, Acclaim amongst others have picked up on mutant appeal with a X-Men adventure guest-starring Spiderman, and a dedicated Wolverine game, that scored highly in our pre-Christmas issue.

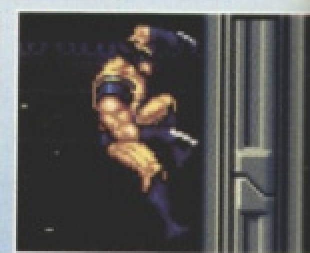
But to the substance of X-Men 2, which, on initial inspection, looks much like the first game: a four-way scrolling platform beat 'em up. However, keeping to the unpredictable and ever-changing nature of the comic series, the names and faces have changed from the first game. The core characters of Wolverine and Gambit are retained, but a wider selection of Xavier's team and a more expansive repertoire of their individual moves have been incorporated, one example being a much more effective ruby laser for Cyclops. You'll find the massive Colossus, Polaris and Magneto included as player characters, plus the amazing Beast, who was one of the original Marvel X-Men way back when, oh, your granny still had her own teeth.

Created from a whole new game engine, X-Men 2 boasts loads more levels than the original, larger layouts and graphics of infinitely better quality. The player sprites are particularly impressive in design and animation. Several nifty special effects have been used, including a blinding blizzard on the very first level.

With the final inducement of a two-player option, X-Men 2 is not merely a sequel in the conventional sense, but a new game in the same mode as the original. If this report catches your fancy, watch out for an imminent review.







1 PLAYERS	
16 MEG	
RELEASE	TBA
BY	ACCLAIM
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	PLATFORM
PERCENT COMPLETE	

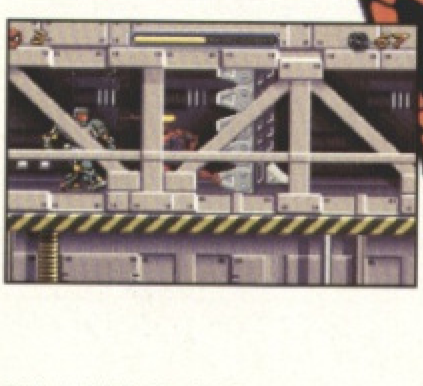
With comic book superheroes literally queuing up to debut on consoles, Spidey can only be described as an old pro when it comes to this game. Lately, however, the web-slinging hero has been undergoing something of a facelift à la Batman: The Animated Series. In preparation for his all-new animated antics, the new-look Spiderman has been scooped up for the Megadrive in the ultimate battle of the Marvel super stars.

In the forthcoming console appearance, courtesy of Acclaim, Spiderman is coaxed from semi-retirement to deal with a mass breakout of super villains from the high security installation, the Vault.

Charged with the responsibility of returning the crazed miscreants back behind bars, our hero must swing his way through the lairs of The Goblin, Dr Octopus, and Lizard, to name but a few, battling cohorts to the final confrontation with his mighty arch-rival, Venom.











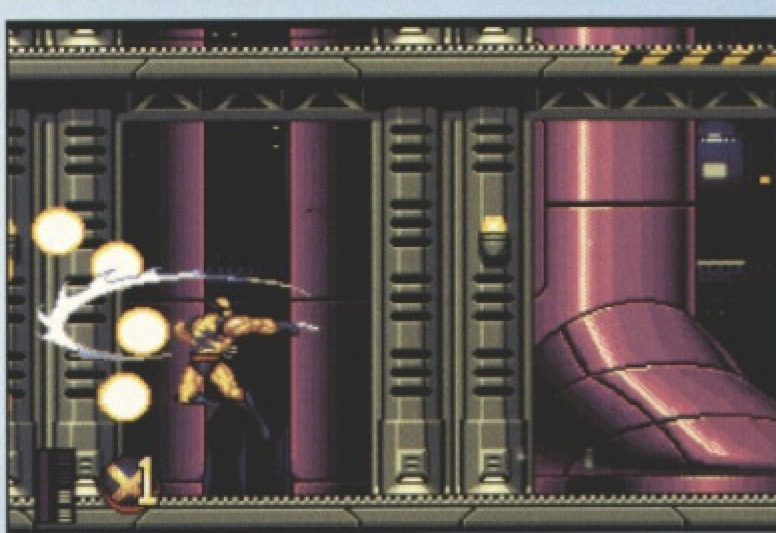




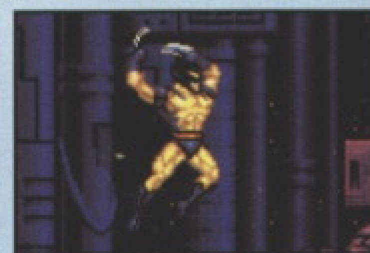




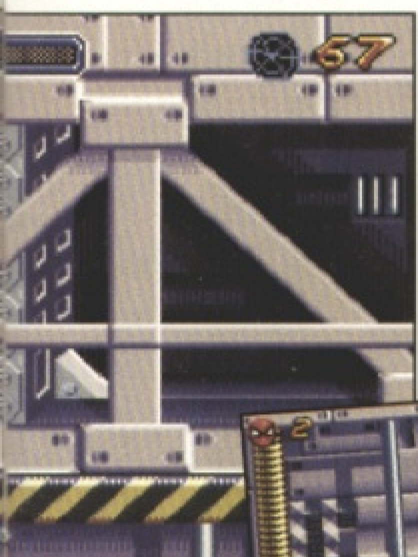
▲ *It's Magneto and his amazing cuban heels.*



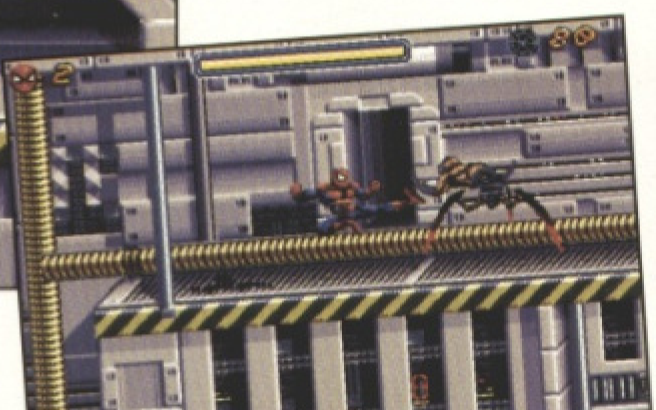




SPIDER-MAN











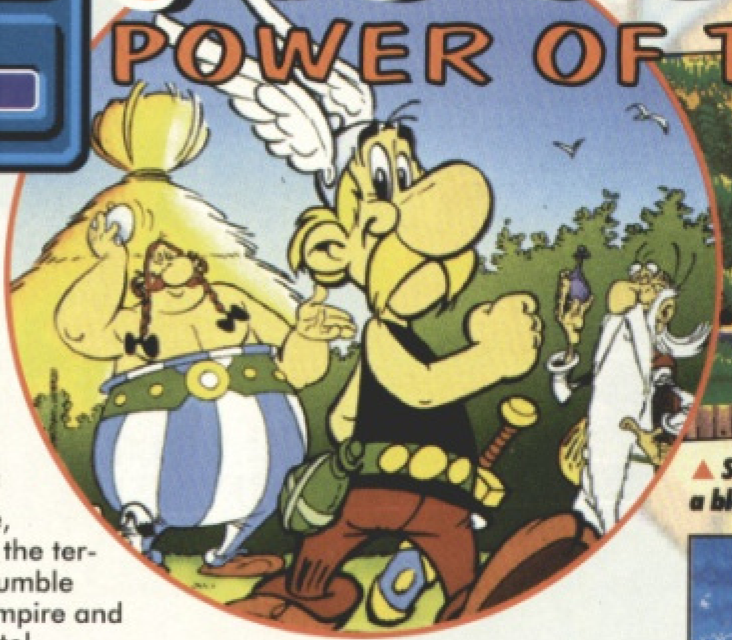
FAN-TASH-TIC!

Spidey's web jets have served him well over the years. Many's been the time when, cornered by baddies baying for his blood, a quick flick of the wrist has whisked him to safety. But times change and weapons become obsolete. That's not to say that Spidey turning in his web shooters! Au contraire, he is merely adding to his firepower by packing a Fantastic Four call-out grenade! Once activated, Mr Fantastic, The Invisible Woman, The Human Torch, and the Thing, all jump into action to remove any enemies foolhardy enough to stand in their way.

1-2 PLAYERS	16 MEG
RELEASE	TBA
BY	SEGA
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	PLATFORM

PERCENT COMPLETE

ASTERIX
POWER OF THE GODS





▲ *Swining suits me just vine (well, gag me with a blow drier!).*



Sacre Bleu! Is the arrivé of yet another Asterix title part of a Froggie video games invasion plan? First Infogrames pop up with Dutch faves the Smurfs, now this. Maybe that Channel Tunnel wasn't such a good idea after all. Actually, the Asterix concept is the work of some Belgians, but they've been sucking up to the French for years anyway.
In any case, it's a platform game, d'accord? Starring the resolutely moustachioed hero of Gaul, defying the might of the Roman Empire, Asterix: Power of the Gods is a jaunt through the territories of the popular graphic novels, from humble peasant settlements to the fortresses of the Empire and even the Emperor's seat of power in the Capitol.
Along the way, Asterix, accompanied by his fat mate Obelix, knock seven bells out of copious legions of sandalled troops with the aid of Getafix's magic potion. There are masses of colourful locations to explore, lending the game visual interest at the moment — much of the gameplay is at an early stage of development, so it's impossible to guess how Asterix is going to rate Asterix is planned for an early Spring release here, and although not Sega's highest profile release of 1995, it should find favour with dedicated fans of the Gollancz books. As the continental coding team work towards completing on the project we're preparing for a review soon.

1 PLAYERS	16 MEG
RELEASE	MAY
BY	SEGA
PRICE	£34.99
GAME TYPE	SPORT

PERCENT COMPLETE





Let's pause, as we often do in the preview section, to consider the great chase double-acts of cartoon history: Daffy and Elmer (dresses up as animal to avoid being shot); Tom and Jerry (Jerry stuffs Tom's tail into electric socket for potentially fatal charge); Penelope Pitstop and Hooded Claw (lipstick or powder compact comes in handy) Bugs and Elmer (again) (gun poked down rabbit hole bends round to emerge at Elmer's bum).
But none — not one — of these comes close to the predictably unexpected machinations of a Road Runner cartoon plot. It begins the same every time: chase scene. Action freezes on characters and zany Latin names are labelled on the protagonists. Then follows 5-10 minutes of the carefully wrought plans of Wily Coyote going awry, and all at hideous expense with all that outlay on ACME equipment.
But the comic potential is endless, and Sega are hoping to milk the cartoon classic in a light-hearted platform game, featuring the characters and familiar locations of the Arizona desert. Playing the part of Wily Coyote, your aim is to explore the surrounding landscape AND nab the Road Runner whenever you can. To our surprise it is possible to achieve the impossible and actually get the bugger, but sadly there's no explicit violence when you do — only a welcome extension to your time bonus. Hopefully Sega can be persuaded to add some unmentionables before the game comes before us for review, very probably in the next issue.



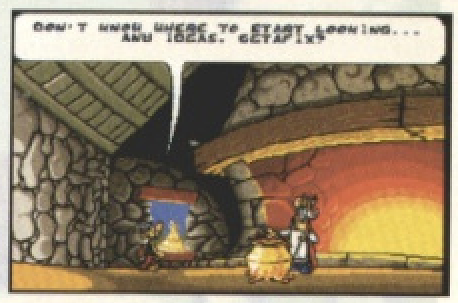












ADRUNNER

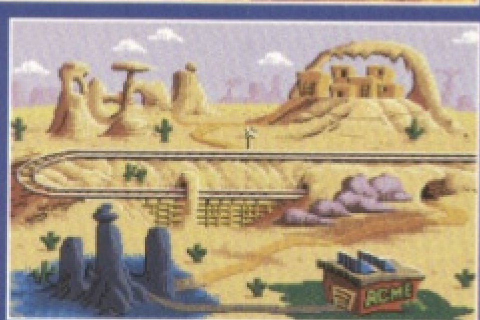


GET YOUR SKATES ON

In the course of Road Runner, you'll find yourself in possession of many of ACME's finest boxed products, which are put to use in your endless pursuit of that bird. Rocket skates, spring shoes, catapults and cannons are dotted around the land-scape. Speaking of which, note the cheeky graphical rip-off of the town level from Virgin's Aladdin game. Programmers with a sense of humour, eh?











1-4 PLAYERS	RELEASE	MARCH
16 MEG	BY	SEGA
	PRICE	TBA
	GAME TYPE	SPORT

PERCENT COMPLETE

ATP T

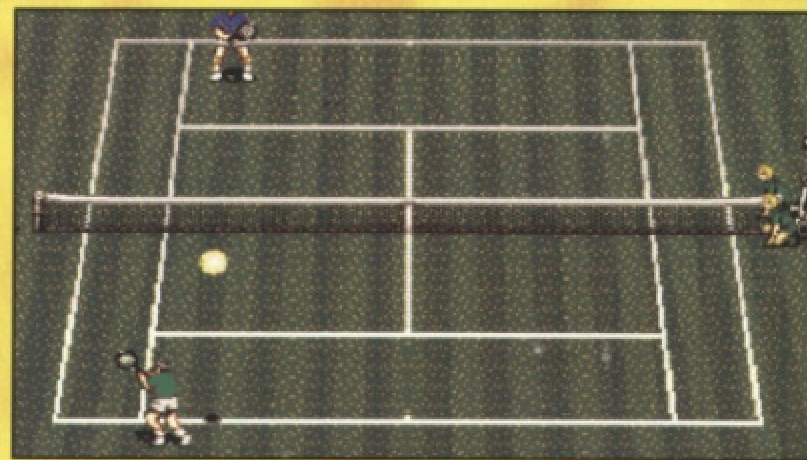
The tennis season may be short-lived in this country, but the releasing-tennis-games season now seems to run throughout the year. The latest to join the rankings is Sega's ATP Tour, an American-based tournament of the Royal game, appearing in the period when Barley Water sales are at an annual low. Adding the adjective 'all-new' would not be strictly accurate, as Sega admit the game is an update of their previous Wimbledon tennis game of almost two years vintage.

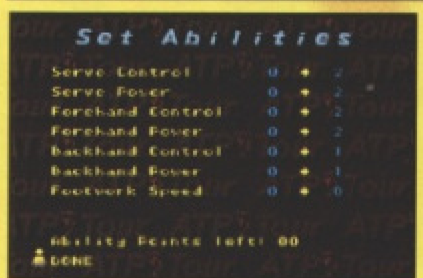
But, they hasten to add, it does contain loads of new features. ATP Tennis has been designed in the light of the stats craze that obsesses most sports game buyers in the States. It's just not patriotic to buy a game which doesn't list every imaginable performance detail of the entire professional circuit for a sport.

For ATP tennis this means details on all the areas of play, from general abilities of speed and accuracy, to breakdowns of certain shot styles. Authenticity is also a key feature, with all the real tournaments of the American tennis circuit included.

There's a mind-blowing selection of players, all with digitised pics, and a clever feature allowing you to mix famous veterans with modern stars in your doubles selection. The game itself plays at a reasonable pace, and the emphasis is on a simple and responsive control system.

ATP Tennis is not short of competitors in the field, unlike Wimbledon Tennis, which was pretty much Hobson's choice when it first came out. The upcoming MEAN MACHINES review will reflect that, in the light of Pete Sampras, Davis Cup Tennis et al.







1-4 PLAYERS	RELEASE	FEBRUARY
16 MEG	BY	ACCLAIM
	PRICE	TBA
	GAME TYPE	SPORT SIM

PERCENT COMPLETE

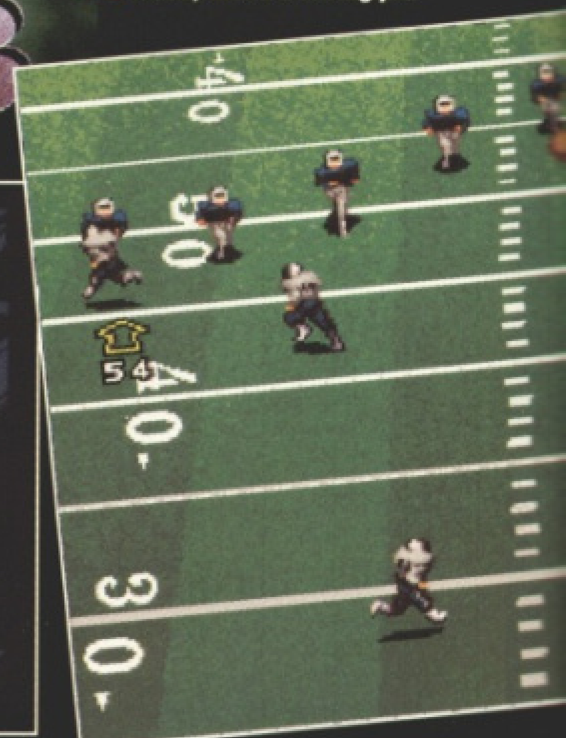
NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB



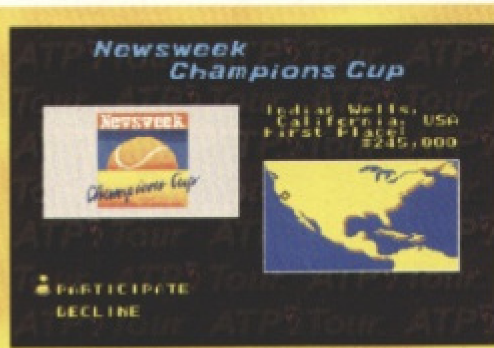
▲ *Claire, that's a boring pic.*

The American equivalent of British strikers, the Quarterback is the lynch-pin of an American Football team. Expert runner and marsksman-like thrower, the Quarterback is entrusted with the job of throwing the ball to the Wide Receivers way up in the opposition's end in hope of scoring a touch-down. In recognition of the Quarterback's role, and in an attempt to make a clean break from the standard Madden affairs, Acclaim have developed the most extensive football game to date. With no less than three play options, does this bode well for the run-of-the-mill sports sims? Find out in our full review coming soon:





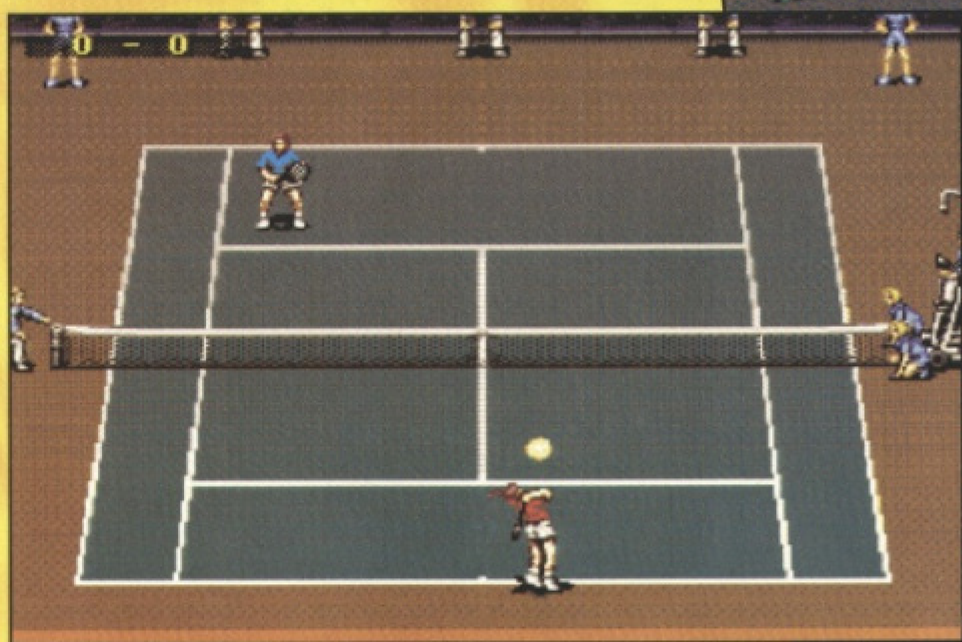


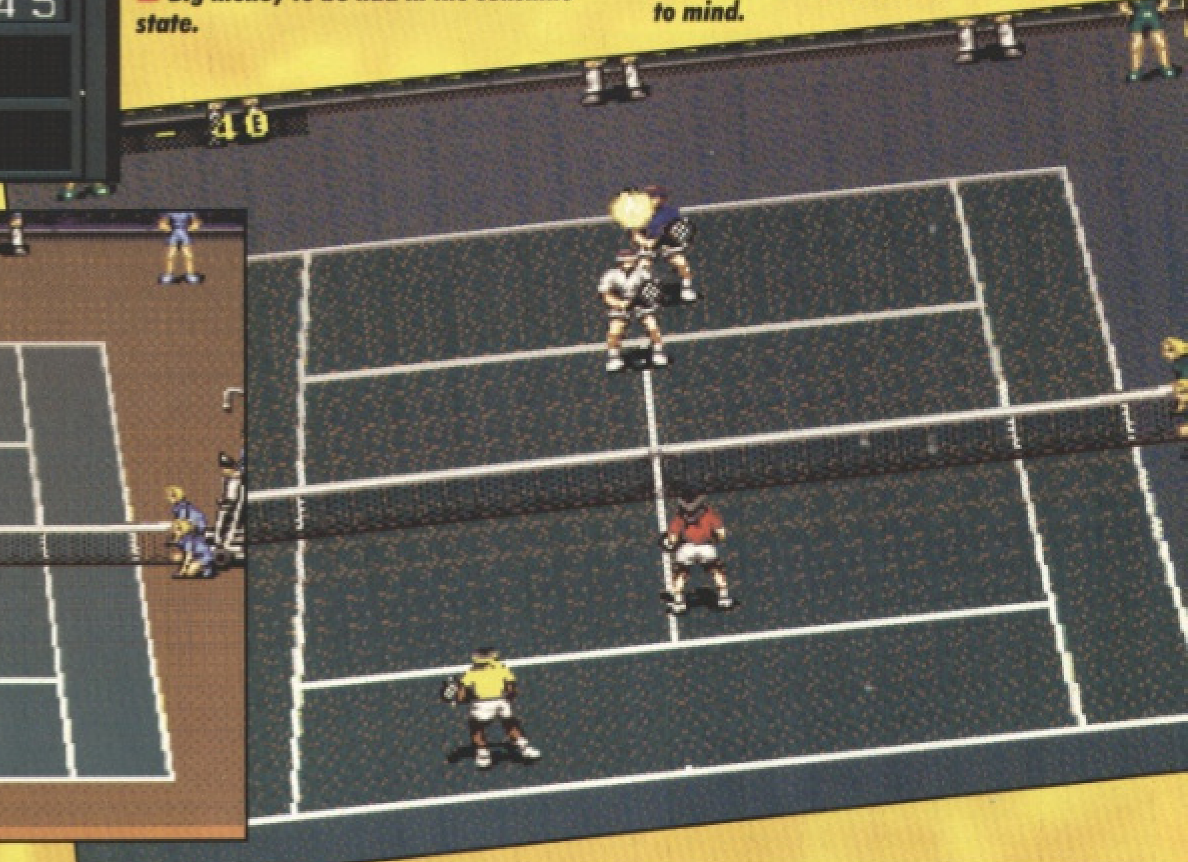


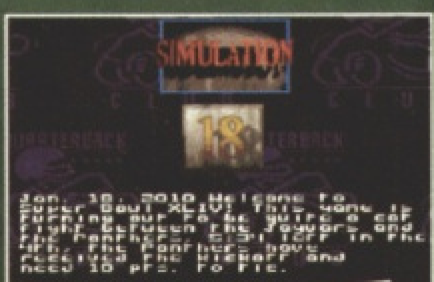
▲ Big money to be had in the sunshine state.

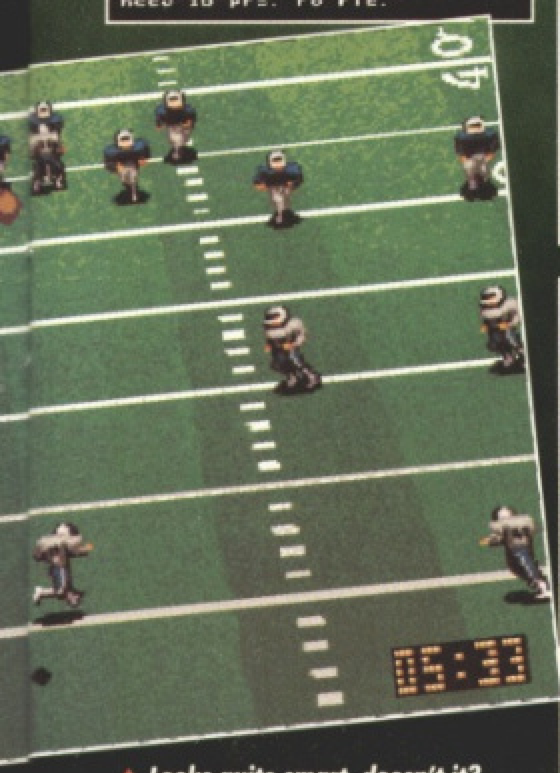


▲ Tanned athletic physique does not spring to mind.

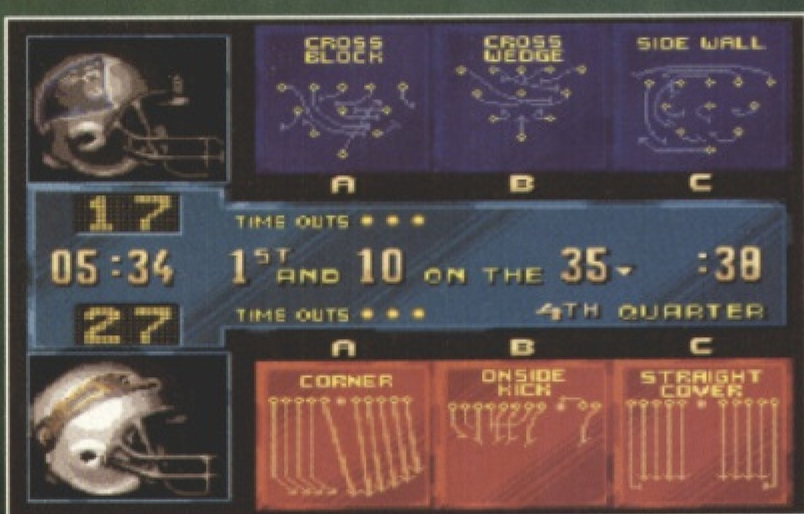


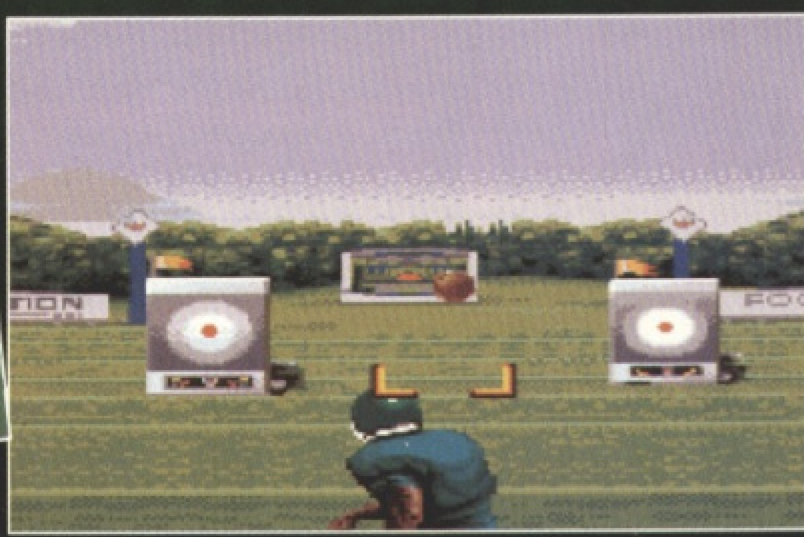






▲ Looks quite smart, doesn't it?





THE GRIDS

Not one, but three features are included in the package designed to hone your skills as a console quarterback. Through the training, actual matchplay, and on to the do-or-die closing minutes situations, success lies in your hands. Let's take a peak at the different disciplines.

QUARTERBACK CHALLENGE

In the Challenge it's back to school. After selecting your player, you can practise your skills in Accuracy, Distance, Speed and Mobility, Read and Recognition. All of these events require precise targeting of the throw bar.

SIMULATION

A completely novel concept, the Simulation puts you in control of up to 30 crunch situations. You know the situation, it's the closing seconds of the game — the decision is to which play you go for. Taken from both past and future(?), there is only one correct solution to saving your team from relegation.

PLAY NFL

Having mastered the playing skills at school, you're going to want to put them into practise. The Play NFL option allows you play the game proper with all of its options, teams, and seasons.

1 PLAYER	RELEASE	TBA
	BY	SHINY
	PRICE	TBA
	GAME TYPE	PLATFORM
PERCENT COMPLETE		

EARTHWORM JIM SPECIAL EDITION



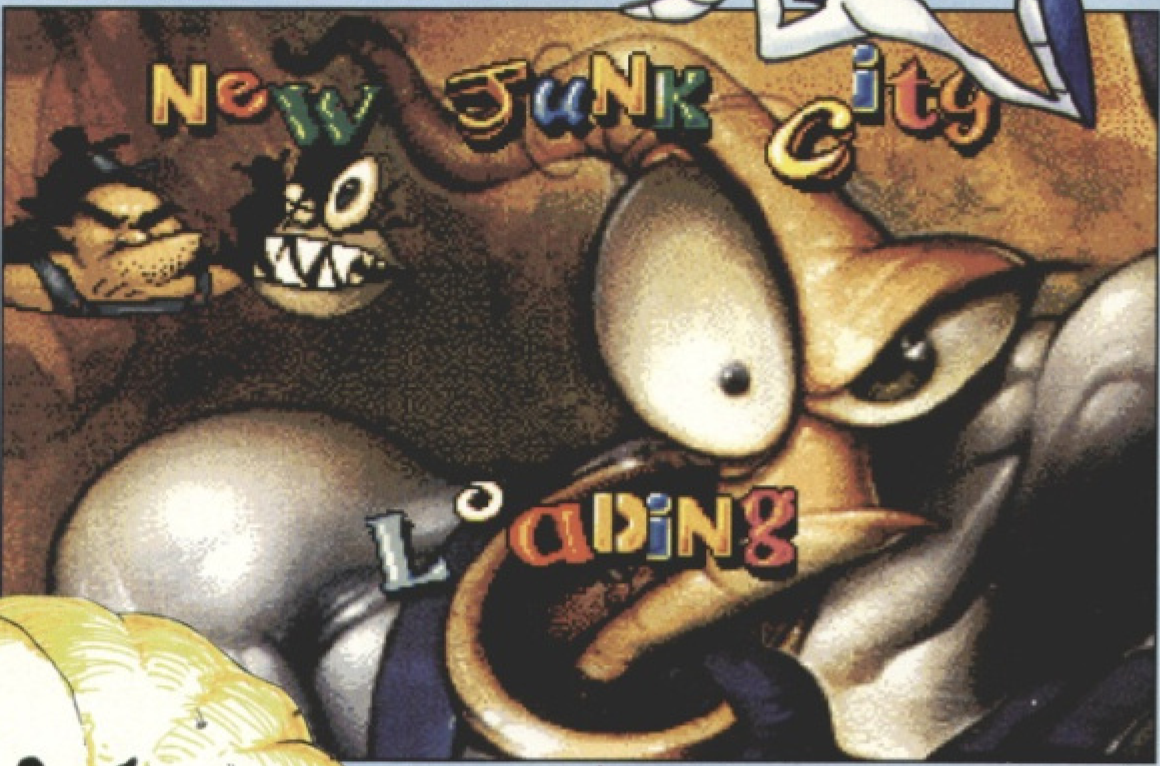
It turned out to be a bit of a pink Christmas. Fuelled by provocative 'Ooo-er missus' billboard ads, and a bit of press controversy, Virgin's Earthworm Jim put on a good show in the software charts. Credit where credit's due, of course, the game itself was excellent, and nary in need of improvement you might think. Dave Perry's Shiny Entertainment mob beg to differ, and have produced an enhanced 'Special Edition' of the game exclusively for Mega-CD owners.

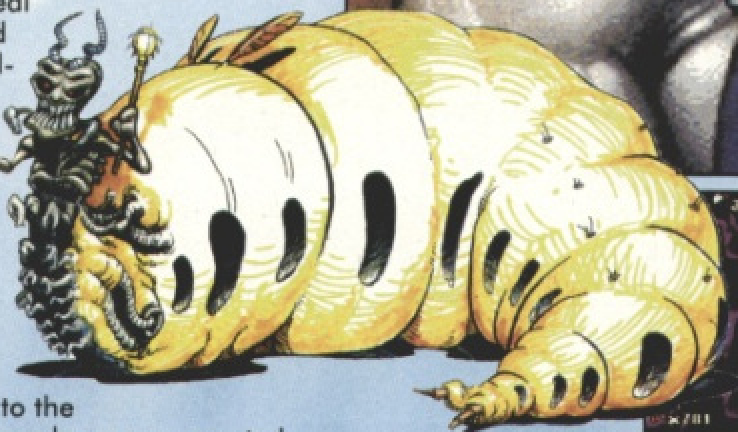
For those of you who 'have just joined the show' Earthworm Jim is a spiffing platform adventure, featuring the battles of a space-suited garden creepy crawly against a demented pathological carrion bird called Psy-crow. The gritty challenge posed by some fiendish level layouts is offset by the humour and virtuoso programming throughout.

The Special Edition is not a vast departure from the original, and should appeal most to those who missed it first time around. An all-new CD soundtrack and opening sequence have replaced those of the cart version, plus new hi-res loading screens (to accompany the dubious 'enhancement' of loading separate stages).

There's some more meat to the game, too. Some levels have been augemented with new areas, new hidden zones, and a whole new area has been tagged onto the end of the game, with distinctive puzzle gameplay of its own. You lure a variety of worm-hungry creatures through a set of mechanical contraptions. The new graphics and animation match the high standards set by the rest of game.

Shiny have also taken the CD version as a chance to tweak the gameplay and character control, hoping to make this the most playable format of the game so far. If that's the case, it's going to be pretty sensational to top the 94% rating as awarded to the cart game. Catch the next MEAN MACHINES and find out.









These bits look the same, but atill good.















▲ Claire, you've captioned this pic twice. You have displeased me Solitaire....





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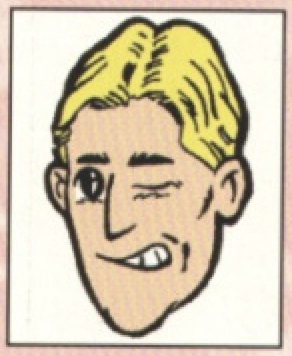
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PAUL'S TIPS



As promised last month, Paul's Tips makes the first tentative tiptoe into the next generation with a topper step-by-step guide to finding the secret bonus level 17 in 32X's virtual hell Doom! What's more thanks to some highly excellent tipster action we have the complete set of codes to both Mega Bomberman and Ecco 2: Tides of Time. Top these with a helping of the final part to the Dynamite Headdy guide, and a total guide to the totally excellent Cannon Fodder, and there you have it — a taste sensation to the Nth degree! Keep those tips flying in to: JUST ONE MORE LUMP OF COAL FOR THE FIRE, LORD EMAP, PAUL'S TIPS, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32, FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

SPARKSTER

ROCKET KNIGHT

PASSWORD GUIDE TO HARD AND VERY HARD MODES

If you cast your minds back to last month, you'll remember the first part of the complete Sparkster guide. This month the fine tradition continues with the passwords to the first four levels of the Hard and Very Hard modes. Tune in next month for the solutions to the last levels for each of the difficulty settings.

MEGA BOMBERMAN

COMPLETE PASSWORDS COLLECTION

True salvation for any Bomberman victims of the past couple of post Chrimbo weeks comes from the ninja bomber himself Billy 'The Whizz' Rimmington (any relation to the head of MI5?!) from Doncaster. Check out this extensive stack of codes to every level in the game.

LEVEL	PASSWORD
1.1	START
1.2	6800
1.3	5120
1.4	7420
2.1	1961
2.2	2731
2.3	5571
2.4	1051
2.5	9799
3.1	4502
3.2	8112
3.3	7422
3.4	1052
3.5	3352
4.1	9643
4.2	0513
4.3	9723
4.4	3353
4.5	5653
5.1	6264
5.2	6344
5.3	9184
5.4	5654
5.5	7954
FINAL AREA	0515



EARTHWORM JIM

CODES UPDATE

Last month these hallowed pages printed the Level Select and Level Skip codes for the boy with the cybernetic war suit, but recently word has reached me of an additional code that allows the player to fully recharge Jim's energy one time per level. Simply pause the game and tap in LEFT, RIGHT, A, B, C, LEFT, RIGHT, and A.

SONIC AND KNUCKLES

ACTION REPLAY CODES

Now it's not often that I print Action Replay codes, mainly because they're a sod to check, but in the case of Sonic and Knuckles and the absence of any other cheats here are the codes from Steven Sibald of Warrington.

FFFFE00001 — LEVEL SELECT
FFFE090001 — DEBUG MODE
FFFE120009 — INFINITE LIVES
FFFE180099 — INFINITE CONTINUES
FFFE24000F — INFINITE TIME



...KSTER ADVENTURES 2



HARD



VERY HARD



LEVEL ONE LEVEL TWO LEVEL THREE LEVEL FOUR

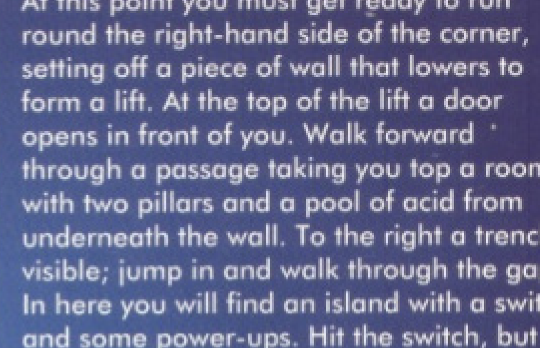
DOOM



SHORT CUT TO BONUS LEVEL SEVENTEEN

Gavin Symes from Cardiff kicks off this month's proceedings with an in-depth guide to skipping from level three to level seventeen of the 32X, Doom. Allegedly all you have to do is start from the beginning of the game as normal, finding as many of the secret rooms and goodies you can. But once you get to level three, follow these straightforward directions. Open the first door and move out into the large room with the acid pool in the centre. Move around the room killing any enemies and stocking up. In the next room, go up the stairs on the right and take the first turning on the left down the steps. Search the room for the switch and activate it. Go back up the steps and turn right to the door you can through earlier. Turn right around and opposite the door between the two windows there should be a new opening to a new room. Go up the new steps and stop once you reach the top. Now turn right and walk slowly. You will hear the noise of a door opening — this is in fact a wall blocking a secret door. Search the room and pick up any useful objects, including the yellow key. Return to the entrance and look into the room.

At this point you must get ready to run round the right-hand side of the corner, setting off a piece of wall that lowers to form a lift. At the top of the lift a door opens in front of you. Walk forward through a passage taking you top a room with two pillars and a pool of acid from underneath the wall. To the right a trench is visible; jump in and walk through the gap. In here you will find an island with a switch and some power-ups. Hit the switch, but before you go, open the secret door on the island (it's the odd coloured wall). Go into the new room and climb on the lift up to find another lift to lead you down to the area where you encountered the first switch. Climb the stairs to the door to the first room. Now where there was once a large drop and pool of acid, you will find a bridge to a secret passage. But beware as the room at the end of the passage opens onto a series of attacks from hell's minions. Once dispatched, another and final passage gives way to an alternate exit direct to the bonus seventeenth level. Phew!



CHAINSAW MASSACRE

Doom's most prized accessory has to be the chainsaw weapon. Go to level 2. After collecting the red key and exiting the first room turn right and pull the switch in the slime room. Return and enter the new area that has opened up. Search for an area where the lights are flickering. When you see a green armour pick-up, shoot the wall behind it. Enter the passage and walk upstairs to a room with a switch. Pull this to lower the pillar holding the saw. Collect and Enjoy.

URBAN STRIKE

Oops! Due to an error at the printers last month, the same page of our Urban guide was printed twice. Sorry and all that, and here's what you were missing. Oh yeah, and needless to say we've slapped the chimp in charge of the potato printing kit...

CASHIER BOOTH



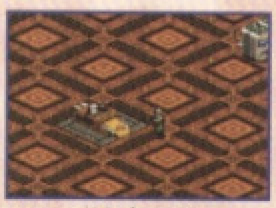
Casino punters are being held in one of the cashier booths. Shoot the booth when the light is off and save the day.

HIGH ROLLER



Malone's floosie is in the casino VIP suite, she will know the location of the secret entrance to Malone's underground bunker. Go to the VIP entrance and make your presence known. Take out the guard before interrogating the high roller.

BOOTH GUNSITES



Those pesky turrets must be destroyed, firstly because they hurt, and secondly because one hides the shuttle car that will take you to Malone's doorstep. Top hint: try the bottom left booth.

CAMPAIGN TEN: UNDERGROUND (W7K9ND3XLDD)

If you've got this far, then there isn't much you won't already know. Use your skills to go through the missions one by one, but don't get carried away and lose your head. Above all use your weapons and fuel wisely as they are in very short supply. Good luck pilot, you're gonna need it! Mind you, funny how they got that helicopter underground...

CLEAR ENEMY WEAPONS

To make your passage to Malone a lot easier, an essential objective to remove the enemy weapons. Keep an eye on the info screen for the updated locations of the forces. A couple of rockets should deal with the hardware.



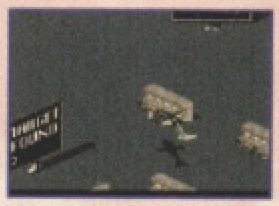
ENEMY BARRACKS

Like the big chickens they are, Malone's tough guys are hiding away in their supposedly bullet proof bunker. Hit it with some missiles and watch them run!

CENTRAL CONTROL



Locate the banks of computers and scientists, and teach them the errors of their ways. You have to take out all of the consoles to ensure Malone's tools of destruction are helpless. Pay particular attention to the snipers hanging around as some have bazookas.



LASER CONTROL

The large metal construction near the control centre houses the giant laser Malone has been using to terrorise the world. But before you can hit the laser, the control must be put out of action. Hit the bank of computers nearest the bunker.

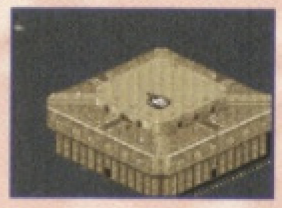


EXPOSE LASER

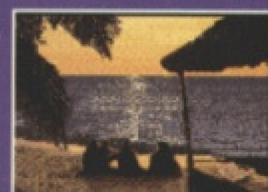
With the laser defences down, go for the steel housing and expose the laser to the world.

MALONE BUNKER

Quite possibly the most heavily-guarded bunker in the game, but nonetheless vulnerable to your attacks. It will take a few hits, make sure they count as the ammo supply is very low.



THE END?!



Ha, ha! Now you've got him. What! He's wired for sound? He's going to blow you and the mission from the sky! The only solution is to drag him kicking and screaming over to the laser and drop him on it. Congratulations you've just saved the world from total destruction. Time for a nice cup of tea, as Pauline Fowler would say to Arthur – but not for much longer mind!



ECCO 2 TIDES OF TIME

LEVEL CODES AND SECRET LEVELS

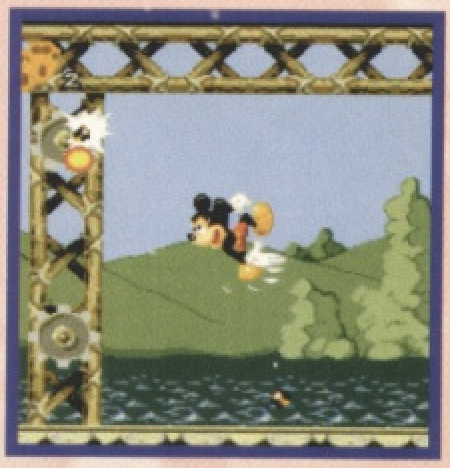
Apparently dolphin steaks are a delicacy on the island of Jamaica—so if I was Ecco I'd give the place a wide berth. But thanks to Patrick Bayliss from Dalmuir in Dumbartonshire, you need no longer be caught in those tricky tides of Ecco's levels.

LEVEL	EASY	NORMAL	HARD
CRYSTAL SPRINGS	SLMLILAFB	OVYKBYEB	WPHSAAFB
FAULT ZONE	MOCCTKZA	YMCXSHZA	UYVCIKZA
TWO TIDES	YYKRPBZA	AAGICVYA	MGCSLVYA
SKY WAY	CZHIELDB	UAREEWCB	OXJRIPDB
SKY TIDES	OBGFHMDB	IYKUXQCB	AAILLQDB
TUBE OF MEDUSA	KLIKAJZA	QMIEWKYA	KPWOOKYA
AQUA TUBEWAY	NONE	NONE	AKLKDPYA
SKYLANDS	OXNSWZEB	MGKYLHEB	IESMIYEB
FIN TO FEATHER	ACPSLZXA	OVIJVYXA	UYZHARXA
EAGLES BAY	SXSPDPDB	EOAVNODB	CRDHYHDB
ASTERITES CAVE	MALHSTXA	SLEJLSXA	GHPRESXA
MAZE OF STONE	NONE	NONE	MOWYRQWA
FOUR ISLANDS	WBCBUGCB	UWKYYYCB	WFSGTYFB
SEA OF DARKNESS	WBOSARWA	WPXGQWWA	QCPNNPZA
VENT OF MEDUSA	WRAIHJYA	WFUXQBYA	QKTURVAB
GATEWAY	KPSNEIEB	CTANDFEB	YQIGSVGB
MORAY ABYSS	ICXUACXA	WNSMRAXA	QOZDVZZA
THE EYE	GJCBWVQE	MYHISVTE	CTOUGUTE
BIG WATER	ODNGQQGA	QQMTILJA	UQVCHJJA
DEEP RIDGE	KYEHHVOD	UXCJMIRD	URLBZNRD
THE HUNGRY ONES	ONIDGUJE	QSZTVCME	ORUFFZLE
SECRET CAVE	QOJSGMPE	GVYSTLRE	MQFLANPE
LUNAR BAY	USGPGMPE	EITNWMRE	QUCFANPE
BLACK CLOUDS	MGSSISKE	WRMKYXNE	CDEWWGLE
GRAVITOR BOX	OBYSXBJE	YAOVAWLE	UYPOUDJE
GLOBE HOLDER	EOSKJFJE	WFAJXULE	GNQVXEJE
NEW MACHINE	NONE	NONE	GGGQUAHA
VORTEX QUEEN	EPCNNAAA	KWRJSSAA	IDJSMSAA
HOME BAY	CCFTOSFA	CKNVEOGA	YJOZOVFA
EPILOGUE	IFQZWKAA	MJLNTIBA	YVWBZOAA
FISH CITY	COJDPDFA	AXPTVMBA	WEVYNQBA
CITY OF FOREVER	CUKWPVKA	WGWQGIHA	MFZNFGHA
SECRET PASSWORDS	ARCUNXDA	OAJDXBBA	ULAUVLEA

MICKEY MANIA

LEVEL SELECT

Last month we had a top hidden room, but this month we go the whole hog, so to speak, by releasing the level select cheat. First off you must go to the Options screen. Enter the Sound Test and switch the music to CONTINUE. Now change FX to APPEAR, and follow this with setting speech to THINK. Exit the Options and hold LEFT for five seconds. If you've done everything correctly a noise will sound and the level select will appear.



MASTER SYSTEM

THE LION KING

Stop the presses! We have a Master System tip! Long gone are the days when the Master System tips used to flood through the letter box, but thanks to Virgin's Lion King Master System owners out there can keep on tipping. James Tuck from Bury St Edmunds informs me that if you roll the D-pad on the ©Disney/ ©Virgin Interactive Entertainment screen, you should hear a bleep when the Virgin logo appears. When you start the game, a level select will appear.

GAME GEAR

THE LION KING

LEVEL SELECT

A second helping for Simba, but this time on the Gear. To go to the Level Select, wait until the Sega logo has faded and rotate the D-pad in a clockwise movement, pressing buttons 1 and 2 and START twice. When you enter the Options screen a Level Select option will appear. Thanks to Michael Jelves from Rayleigh in Essex for that tippet.

BUBBLE AND SQUEAK

LEVEL CODES

A totally cute, but totally tricky little number, Bubble and Squeak is bound to have some of you writhing in frustration. Not to worry as the very helpful Wayne Ennis from Liverpool has some codes to push you past some of the trickier levels.

RQCRQBPT
NHHDHHBH
QOFLLMMP
NNBNNDYY
MNLLMNNL
WTSFFHGW
PPGOMPFP
SDFSDFPH
RGMSPSDY



WARNING! Concentrated gameplay approaching. When we got our hands on Marubeni's Bubble and Squeak some months back we were more impressed the further we got. Just how can a game that looks more innocent than Shirley Temple be quite so deviously designed. Unperturbed we began charting a course through its bewildering levels starting from level three, the balance of the game appears next month.

NEVERGLADES 1

Kill all the baddies on the bottom platform level for coins. Find the gum jar and use, then ride bub along to the platform on the left beside the half-pipes and perform a throw. Get the spring and take it to the bottom level, and jump to the hidden stash of gems (pic). Next, kick bub through the half-pipe layout. Go back to the bottom level, take bub to release the captive and exit.



STARBURST CAVERNS 3

Get three coins first. Collect bub and move right to guide him to the second platform. Take the lift to the gum jar and use. Ride bub to the second lift and leave underneath. Get a throw up and walk right to gem area (pic) and bubblecar token. Go back and collect bub, ride the lift and kick him through the half-pipe. Get a throw up to free captive. Stand bub on the third lift and pull the switch.



STARBURST CAVERNS 4

Get bub, go right, killing baddies. Kick him round two sets of half-pipes. Make him throw you to the left-hand platform and bring down the lift for you both. Take Bub as far right as possible. Jump down and left to get car token and extra life. Bub should join you. Bring down spring from top right area to bounce him across barrier (pic). Kick him around the half-pipe, collect spring and mount 'stairway' to platform on other side of lift switch. Spring over and rescue captive to left. Return right use lift and exit.



STARDUST CAVERNS 5

Collect Bub and guide him right and up. Kick him round the half-pipe to the gum jar. Ride him to the upper level and take him to the half-pipe circuit on the left-hand side. Kick him through from the left, then climb up and right to locate him near the lift switch. Go up alone to get the spring, then take it to the platform underneath the exit and bounce. You can enter an area with the captive (pic). Return to Bub, take the lift and exit.



NEVERGLADES 2

Go down to the bottom level and get coins from baddies. Climb to the top and round to the left for bub. Kick him through the half-pipes, then get into position beneath the extra life and jump to stop the flying bub (pic). Get a throw to reach the life. Take bub to the left and knock him through the half-pipe circuit again.
This time stop him in the lower section of the level. Lead him to the gum jar and use. Both of you now go collecting gems and them drop him near the exit. Jump to the platform above the exit for the car token and captive.

DIAMOND FOUNDRY 1

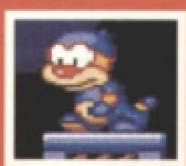
Simple. Take Bub up to switch level, then kick up the first half-



KEY GUIDE

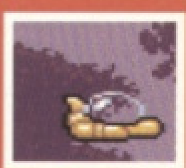
To keep things brief, the text refers to certain key features and actions used frequently. This key explains what they are and how to use them.

BUBBLE



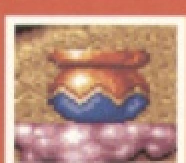
Squeak's mate (AKA 'Bub'). By 'tagging' Bubble, he may follow Squeak, but cannot jump as high. It's essential to take him to the exit and keep him above water.

BUBBLECAR



The third objective: a little icon that takes you to the shoot 'em up sub game if you can find it.

POTS



Objects to stand on, usually for Squeak to reach platforms.

THE 'THROW'



Whenever directed, this refers to Squeak standing in front of, and being thrown upward by Bubble.

GUM JAR



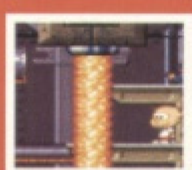
This bubblegum dispenser works when Bubble is guided to it and three coins are inserted. Then Squeak can ride him and use his bubble power.

SQUEAK



The character always under direct player control. He can jump, shoot stars, collect jewels, operate the gum jar, and free the captives.

FIRE SWITCH



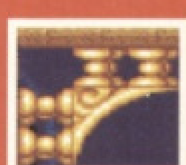
These release a torrent of magma that temporarily lowers the rising water level.

THE 'KICK'



Squeak can propel Bubble left or right. This is used with the half-pipes to move him around the play area.

HALF PIPE



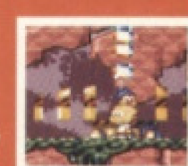
The right-angled pieces of metal used to deflect Bubble after he has been kicked.

SPRINGS



These increase jumping power. Repeated bounces get higher jumps. Springs can be stacked for really big jumps.

CAPTIVE

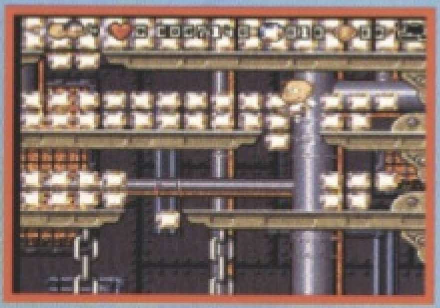


Freeing the captive is the second objective on every level. You need to take about 50 jewels to the captive chamber.

pipe system. Climb up with Squeak and get the car token. Repeat for the second pipe system and climb up, watching for the spiders. Lead bub to the exit and release the nearby captive.

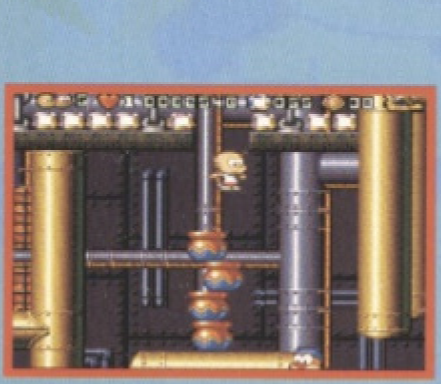
DIAMOND FOUNDRY 2

Kill the baddies on the bottom level. Go right and use springs to get the gems in the top right area (pic). Bring the springs back down from top first and stack them upon each other near the gum machine, by releasing them as you bounce. Jump onto the highest spring to reach an area of baddies and the captive. Use the gum jar to join with Bub and head for the exit together.



DIAMOND FOUNDRY 3

Get Bub then run along the ledge killing baddies as he runs scooping gems on the bottom level. Leave him to get the pot from the right. Bring it down to the set of ledges holding pots and get each in turn by stacking them. Now take all the pots up to the gum jar and stack them on the gold platform to the right. Get the car token. Go back for Bub and leave him at the gum jar. Jump on the stacked pots to reach the captive, using the spring to escape. Restack the pots for you both to get to the exit.



NEVERGLADES 3

Throw the pot into the sludge as s stepping stone. Get the car token, then take the springs back across and bounce up to the second level carrying one. Use it to collect the gems and the spring from the platform above. Take a spring down to bub and use the gum jar, then both of you spring up. Take bub near to the exit and leave him. Go back and get the spring, taking it to the original spring site. Use it to free the captive.



NEVERGLADES 4

Ignore the pots, as they are a red herring. Collect bub and have him throw you up to reach the baddies. Collect coins and use them in the gum jar. Travel left across the sludge together, the jumps need to be pixel-perfect and the jump button held for maximum distance. Jump on the elephants backs to collect all the gems. You will need almost all to free the captive. Leave Bub near the exit as you free him and get the car.



NEVERGLADES 5

Use the pots as stepping stones on the sludge. Jump up and use the fire switch repeatedly until empty. Get bub and jump on spring to get him over the wall. Then leave him as you collect both spring and leave on the other side of the sludge. Get the spring from above and stack it. Go back for bub and bounce him onto the springs to reach the high platform. Take him to the second fire switch and leave him. Go off and collect gems from the upper areas.
Now use the switch until done. Take bub and a spring down and go far to the left. Kick him into the half-pipe circuit. Take the spring back and use it to reach the green platform. You have to stop Bub flying by timed jumping (he passes about every 10 seconds). Fire him to the right. Now jump on the spring to the right to get through gap and fall to lower area of the level.
Jump up to use the final fire switch. Now make your way along this top platform killing baddies. When you find Bub, use the adjacent gum jar and tap the jump button to make him fly. Collect all the remaining gems in this area and the one above. Go up the narrow shaft to find the captive, car and exit.



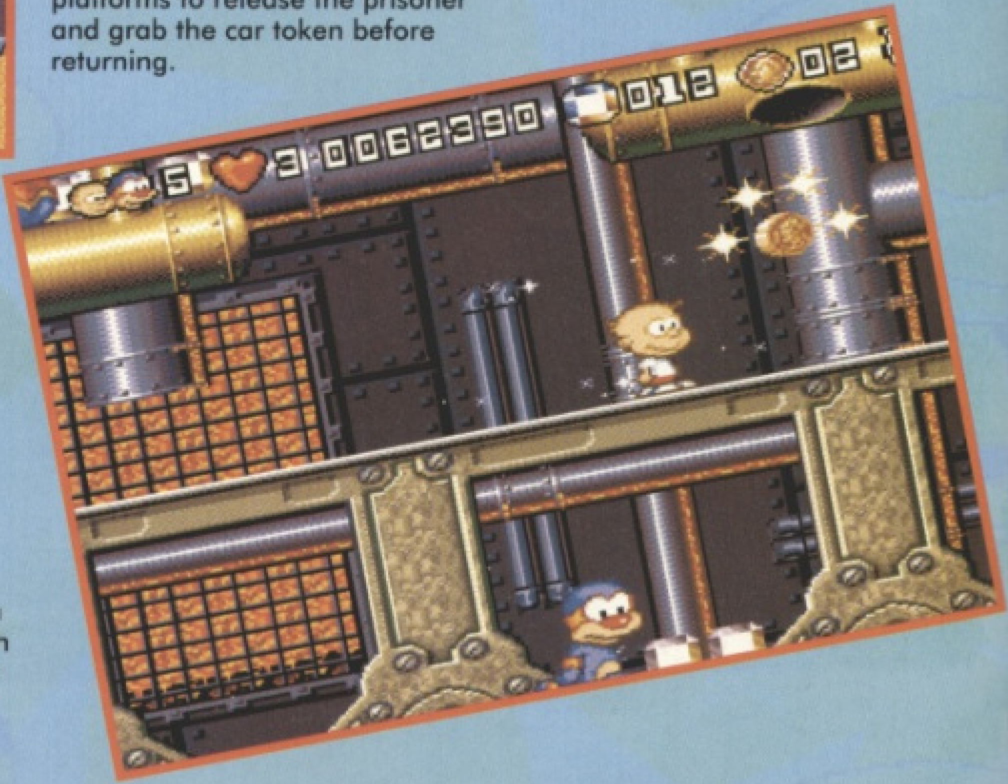
STARDUST CAVERNS 6

Take Bub to the end of the starting platform. Get him to throw you up to collect the pot. Bring it back, then kick him through the half-pipe while you use the pot. Collect Bub and take him to the gum jar. Together go up and right on the moving platforms. Leave Bub beside the exit, while you travel back to the left on the platforms to release the prisoner and grab the car token before returning.

STARDUST CAVERNS 7

A chance to rack up massive gem bonuses. Take Bub to shaft. Have him throw you onto the lift switch. There is a hidden room a small jump to the right, which contains an extra life. Go back and get the lift. When Bub is standing on it, get him to throw you just before it passes the mid-level platform. Push to the left and you land on a small ledge. Above this is an Aladdin's cave of gems and another extra life. (commit suicide to restart the level and gain infinite lives). Next, get bub and walk him to the far right of the level. kick him up the half-pipe. Climb up and take the auto moving lift. Bub has moved some distance. Use the pot to reach higher platforms. Release the captive and walk left across baddie-infested areas. When you find Bub, kick him through the half-pipe, first up to the dead-end, then use the pot to climb up and knock him through the other way. Walk right to collect the car, taking the pot with you to reach the exit platform.





SILICA ARE NOW IN 18 BRANCHES OF DEBENHAMS SEE BOTTOM PANEL FOR DETAILS

THE FUTURE STARTS WITH JAGUAR

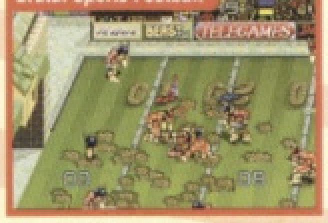
THE WORLD'S ONLY 64-BIT CONSOLE

AWESOME SOFTWARE

Alien vs Predator



Brutal Sports Football



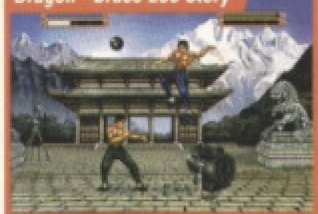
Checkered Flag



Doom - Special Edition



Dragon - Bruce Lee Story



Iron Soldier



- **SUPER CONSOLE! AHEAD OF THE PACK**
  Atari's Jaguar offers more power than any other system. It is totally futureproof with the power of virtual reality and remote gameplay via modem expected during next year.
- **PLAY FROM ANY VIEW**
  Change play perspective. View gaming areas from above, left, right, behind or in front.
- **ZOOM IN FOR CLOSE UP ACTION**
  Jaguar allows you to zoom in on any part of a game's play area.
- **SAVE STATE OF PLAY**
  Store those high score tables and game positions in special random access memory stored on the cartridge.

EXPECTED DURING '95

- **LINK UP WITH 'CATBOX'**
  The optional extra Catbox plugs into the back of your Jaguar, enabling you to connect a wide variety of add-ons simultaneously. Facilities include the ability to link up to 32 Jaguars together for multi-player games such as Doom and Club Drive.
- **CD-ROM FILMS & UNBELIEVABLE GAMES**
  Tap the power and speed of CD-ROM with Atari's Jaguar add-on (expected Feb '95). Play bigger 3D games, standard audio CDs and films (with optional extra FMV module - expected Apr '95). The CD-ROM drive also includes a virtual light system, which creates an interactive light show in time with CD audio output.
- **VIRTUAL REALITY'S COMING**
  Watch spaceships whirl around your head, laser bolts slice past you, sounds of destruction fill your head as you become part of the game. Jaguar's virtual reality helmet is expected in 1995.
- **CONNECT WITH A WORLD-WIDE NETWORK**
  In the world of Jaguar, distance means nothing. Play against Jaguar owners in New York, France, Greenland or even Australia. Plug in your optional virtual reality helmet, and do battle in cyberspace with players from around the world.

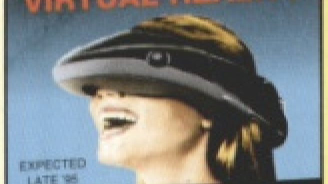
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- Unique 360° Gameplay
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- 16.7 Million Colours
- CD Quality Stereo Sound
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- Plugs Straight into a TV
- Free Cybermorph Game
  On Cartridge - Worth £39 INC VAT

Alien v Predator - JGS 1122	NOW	£54
Brutal Sports Football - JGS 1532	NOW	£49
Bubsy the Bobcat - JGS 1581	NOW	£39
Chequered Flag - JGS 1761	NOW	£54
Club Drive - JGS 1794	NOW	£49
Crescent Galaxy - JGS 1852	NOW	£39
Doom - Special Edition JGS 2282	NOW	£54
Dragon - Bruce Lee Story - JGS 2272	NOW	£49
Evolution - Dino Dudes - JGS 2462	NOW	£39
Iron Soldier - JGS 4011	NOW	£49
Kasumi Ninja - JGS 4502	NOW	£54
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Wolfenstein 3D - JGS 8932	NOW	£49
Zool 2 - JGS 9312	NOW	£39
Syndicate - JGS 7301	JAN '95	£49
Theme Park - JGS 7501	JAN '95	£49
Cannon Fodder - JGS1704	FEB '95	£44
Charles Barkley Basketball - JGS 1741	FEB '95	TBC
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Troy Aikman Football - JGS 7831	MAR '95	TBC
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Battlezone 2000 - JGS 1341	EARLY '95	TBC
Battlemorph - JCD 1201	EARLY '95	TBC
Blue Lightning - JCD 1531	EARLY '95	TBC
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Legions of the Undead - JGS 4941	EARLY '95	TBC
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DYNAMITE HEADDY PART 2

This instalment concludes our Dynamite Headdy guide started in issue 27, and delayed last month by space restrictions. All you lucky receivers of Dynamite Headdy over Christmas could be needing some help on those tricky later levels. Here they are with as many secret bonuses as we could lay our eyes on, plus that invaluable level skip reprinted for true desparadoes.

FLYING GAME

This is the first of three forced-scrolling shoot 'em up levels that change the pace of the game entirely. You have the choice of three firepowered heads, each of which have a place of optimum usefulness:

BIPLANE HEAD

It has two features: a wide-angle three-stream fire attack, covering a large area, and it's the only head that can fire in reverse. The disadvantage is its low shot power.



BIRD HEAD

It has the most intense fire stream, a torrent of little birds. However, the stream arcs downwards, leaving you vulnerable to attack from above or the same level.

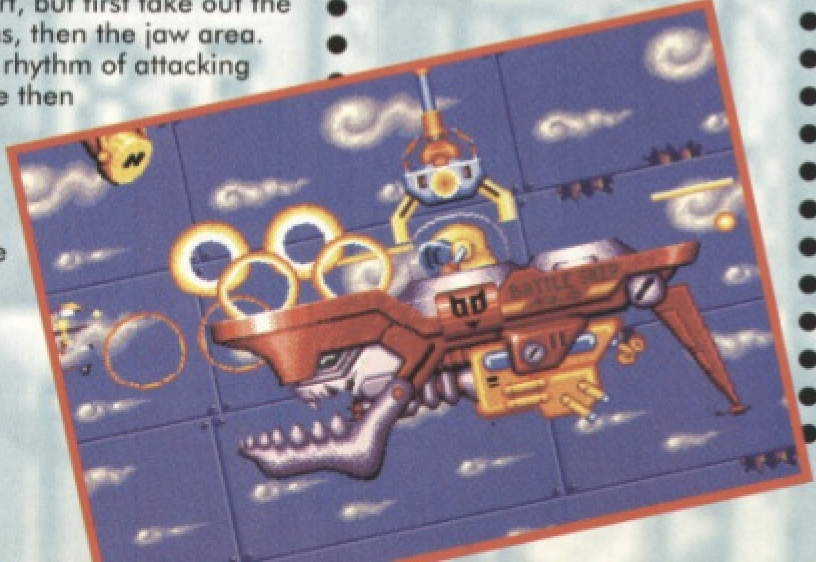


LASER HEAD

The most powerful shot power head, the laser comes in a single stream. Making it the preferred option for heavy targets, it leaves Headdy vulnerable to attack from behind and requires him to be on the same level as the foe.



Pick up the biplane head to deal first with the vertical rockets, and then the bombs which encircle your ship. Shoot a gap in front of them, then escape the ring before it closes in. Change to the laser head as only other foe on this level is the mothership suspended on the crane. The crane grab is the weak part, but first take out the little guns, then the jaw area. Set up a rhythm of attacking the crane then ducking down to the jaw area when the helicopters release their bombs.



SB ***Wait on the ledge before take off, as the headcase circles through the different plane heads. Nab it when the special bonus symbol appears.***



SB ***Bring down at least three of the vertical rockets that appear at the beginning of the stage for a sharp-shooters special bonus point.***



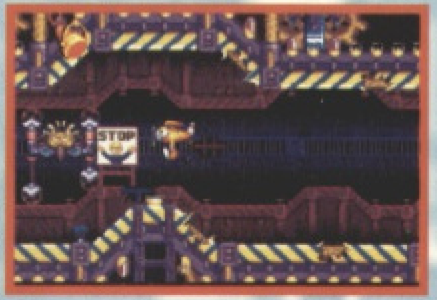
FLY HARD

This rather tedious level is set in a narrow tunnel. Trouble Bruin trundles along, moving in and out of the foreground and background. Select the biplane head, as you have to move to positions on both the right and left of the screen. Bruin drops ceiling and floor guns which you should not cross the path of. He has two missile attacks. The gold missiles are indestructible and should be side-stepped. The darker ones are easy to shoot down. TB does take damage, but we've never been able to destroy him before the tunnel ends.



FLY HARD 2

A mini Nemesis level, which offers the best chance to use the bird head, at least for the first few screens. The route you select doesn't really matter — picking the down path avoids most of the shooting action. Just remember the blue foes are invulnerable and avoid the balloon bomb payloads.

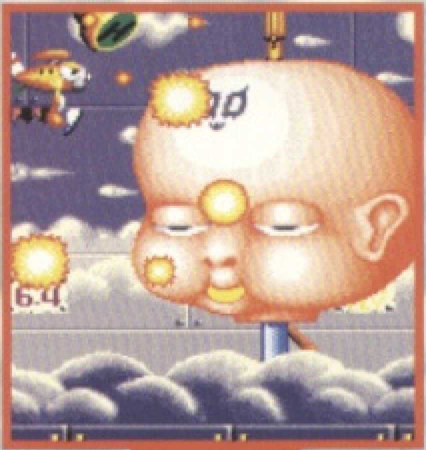


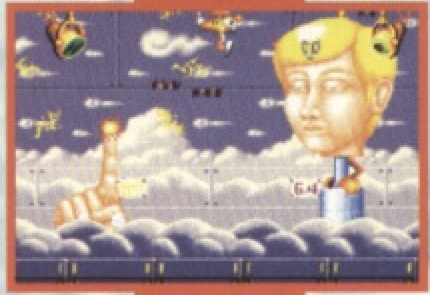
BABY FACE

The flying stage's finale boss. Select the biplane head for this stage.

Part one is Baby Face, who burps slow-moving fireballs. Fire from the left-hand side until they get close then nip over the top for a reverse attack. Not too difficult. Second is Boy Face. During his attack, a finger appears through the clouds, directly under your plane. This means you must keep moving when Boy Face is static. Try to avoid being sandwiched

between the finger and the face, as it is harder to avoid the sparks.
Last is Man Face. Take up a position on the left-hand side. Ignore the distraction of the grid pulled down by Man Face. Instead, judge the position of his lasers from the angle they leave his face. Making slight adjustments to your position in the top left corner is enough to avoid him. One final tip, stay at the top of the screen as the boss metamorphoses through his stages, or you may get hit by his discarded shell.







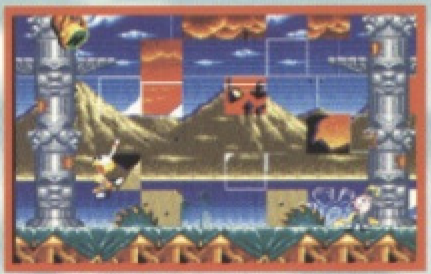




HEADDY WONDER-LAND

A short but tricky phase, as Headdy and Heather conspire to enter the Puppet Kingdom.

All the work for the first boss is



done by Heather. All you need to do is sidestep his extending arms. He'll attack with the arm nearest you, so always move to his outside — not between his legs. The side you are on should be determined by Heather's position. She will successfully toss the key into the basket if the basket is facing towards her. The basket always swings to the opposite side of the robot's attacking arm. Confused? Example: If Heather is standing on the left side, stand on the right-hand side of the robot.
The second phase of the level is treacherous. The robot is only vulnerable when both arms are raised. Go to the side of the screen so his free claw attacks you. It goes off-screen and pulls on headcase. From here there are two methods to killing him:
SLOW METHOD:Select the invisible head and stand directly beneath him, attacking when both arms are raised. You will need to continually collect the invisi head immediately after each attack. If you hit Heather you lose your own energy.
FAST METHOD:Requires some luck. Collect the bomb head and lay it directly between his feet. With any luck, he will be vulnerable as it explodes, destroying him instantly.

SB ***Butt the second black cow you come across for a secret bonus point.***



SB ***There is a flock of yellow birds perched on a ledge. Butt the slightly larger ugly duckling one for a second secret bonus.***



SB ***When you play the metamorphosed boss, butt beau off-screen after a few seconds. The robot may claw him back on-screen. Butt him again for the final secret bonus point.***



THE ROCKET TIER

There are two ways to complete the horizontal section. When you hear the siren, there's a few seconds warning to get out the path of the oncoming missile. Method one is for cowards. Pick the shrinking head and wait in the troughs until the missile passes.
The second method allows you to collect the points bonuses. Use the spike head and cling to the ceiling as the missile passes. You have to tap the head button rapidly to stay aloft.

ILLEGAL WEAPON 3

This is a laborious section, but with a simple method. Wait in the trough until the missile passes. Grab the spike head and hit the baddie behind the desk twice, then rush back, stand in the trough and grab the shrinking head before the missile is launched. Repeat this procedure. If the siren goes off immediately after a missile launch there is no time to perform the attack and you must wait for the next gap.

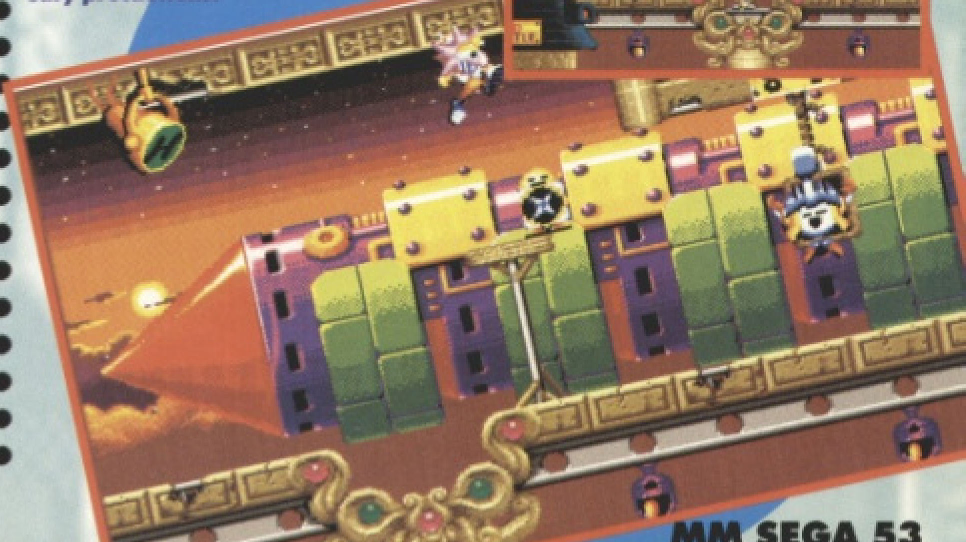








▼The largest love missile yet seen in a Megadrive game. Take the necessary precautions.



DYNAMITE HEADDY

SB ***When you've destroyed the missile launcher, the spectator baddies fall from their gallery. Butt them to pick up a secret bonus.***

FUN FORGIVEN

Jump over the first penguin and freeze the second to reach the bonus game head. Hit the second penguin on the blue flooring to drop to the level below. Hit the penguin when off the blue flooring to stand on its head and hit the pharoah. Go down to the wheeling statues. Only hit the top part to make a ledge for Headdy.

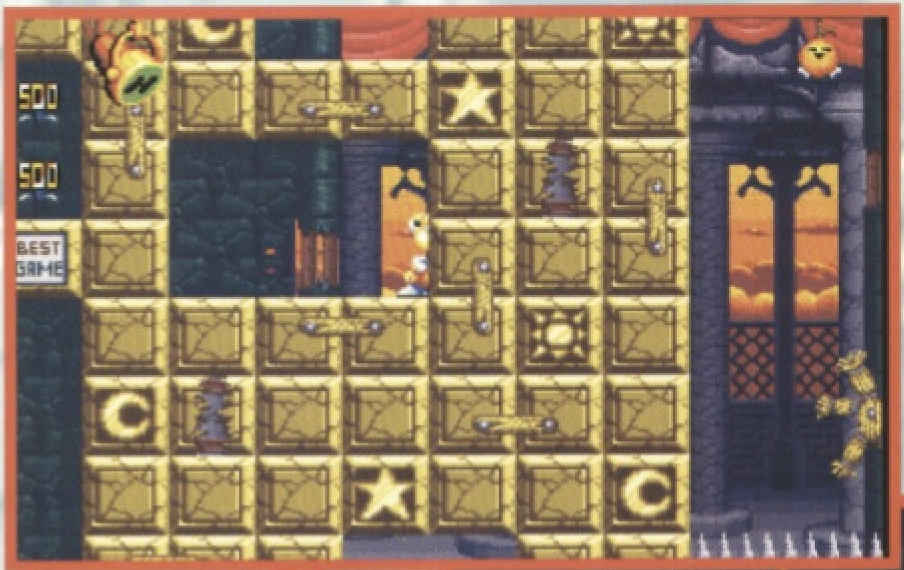


Move to the right to take on the Sun Boss. The numbered spinning icons relate to damage inflicted on the space. Three hits with the tiny '8' icon should be enough to defeat its first stage. On the next stage, pick up the sleepy head frequently when your energy spotlight goes to yellow. A flurry of blows with the spike head should see him off.



Now take the spike head and go left. Pull yourself up the shaft with the buzzsaws. You encounter potted plant foes. You must duck as you butt them to strike the weak point of the pot. You come to a large open room with spinning headcases. Go into the centre and stand on the narrow safe platform. Descend and walk through secret passages on both right and left. Return and jump on the corn dollies on your left.

Jump into the wall and reveal another bonus-stacked series of secret chambers. There's a similar set next to the corn dolly on the right hand side. To leave the level, stand on the rightmost corn dolly and grab the headcase in a left diagonal from you. Do it just as it is about to turn away, which is perfectly timed to grab the headcase to its right, which has now just turned round. Exit stage right.



VICE VERSA

A short and trouble-free level. The reversing nodes are put to better use next in Twin Freaks. All you need to do is butt the glass cubes into position to cross the spikes. The boss is almost as easy. Butt the reverse node as the boss passes above the boulders and it will be struck on the head. Push two boulders close together for a potential double strike.





SB ***The green cylinder baddies proffer a secret bonus is you butt three of their bombs before destroying them.***



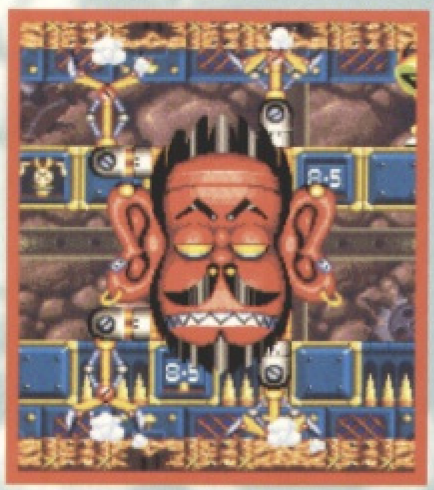




SB ***On the Sun Boss first hit the icon with the heart thre times to receive the resultant special bonus.***

TWIN FREAKS

Nasty. You are pursued along a corridor by a Janus-faced monster. He is only vulnerable when green, but changes colour when you flick the screen. The key to success is to take him out before you reach the section of the corridor that twists, forcing you to backtrack. Get in as many hits in the first section of open space, and don't flick him from green to red unless it is really necessary. Lastly, there's a single headcase carrying a 3-way head. Get that and butt like mad.



SB *Randomly, Twin Freaks will let loose the SB symbol instead of his normal missiles. Butt it instantly for the secret bonus point.*

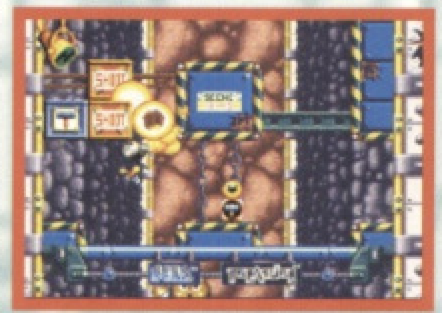


▲ *He's invulnerable as Red, and quite a bit faster.*

FATAL CONTRAPTION

This forced scrolling level starts hard but gets simpler. First, jump up to get the hammer head, but beware of getting the slow head. Break the wooden blocks and use the hammer head to push the platforms on rails. The only one which moves enough to let you through is the left centre one. Take the right hand route, pushing only one of the second set of platforms. Ignore the shrinking head further up — take the full sized





route. You need to push the platforms with the woman on them with rapid button presses. Go for the final set of wooden blocks to complete the stage. Ignore the Trouble Bruin contraption throughout this, it's invincible, but watch out for the occasional missile launched from his cannon.



SB *Butt the little brown men who jump between the platforms near the beginning of the level for a secret bonus point.*



FAR TREK

Not a big problem. Trouble Bruin runs with you but cannot hurt you, butt him quickly if he get hold of you, but your main concern is keeping out of the laser fire of the haywire contraption. Two recommended places are; at the far right of the screen jumping — his fire should aim horizontally, and beneath his feet, slightly to the right or left as the gun only has a few set firing positions and should miss you.



FINALE ANALYSIS

Most of this is up top you. The boss has various random stages of attack. Before each one a selection of heads revolves around you. The most effective attack weapon is the hammer head, so pick that if it's there. Otherwise take the star-firing head. If you can, hit the boss with the hammer head then try and nab the shrinking head as several of his attacks are best avoided in that guise.

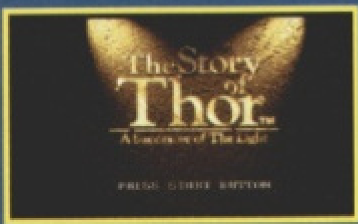




▲ *Your pal is heathernapped for the umpteetn time.*



The Story of Thor
A Successor Of The Light



1 PLAYERS | **24 MEG**

GAME TYPE: ADVENTURE

PRICE: £59.99

BY: SEGA

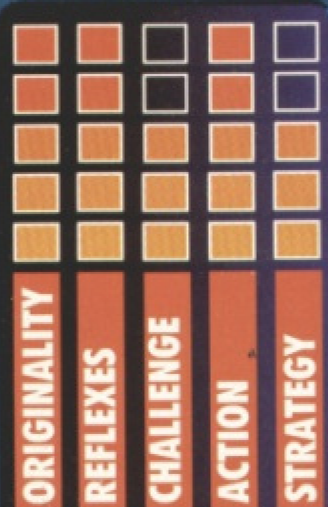
RELEASE: MARCH

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: BATTERYSAVE
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS:EXCELLENT
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
Reach the swamp fortress.

ORIGIN
Thor has been aeons in develop (as befits such a massive game) from new team on the block, Ancient.

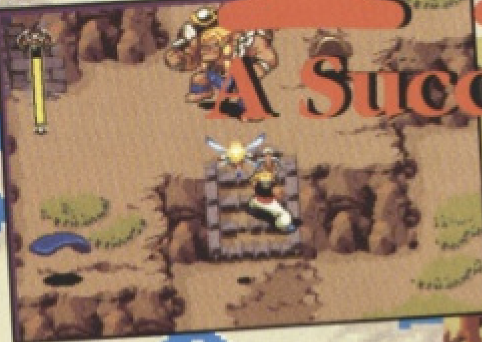
GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Reunite the twin armlets to protect your kingdom from the evil intentions of Shade and the silver armlet.

Thor's parents, King and Queen, tried not to worry about their son. The impetuous young prince was the both the darling and the bane of the news sheets, depending on how the editor felt that day. Several of high society's virgin damsels had been linked with the celebrated bachelor, but adventure was more his bag, and he rarely spent two consecutive nights at the Royal Palace, between his trips to potential treasure sites and far-off fabled places.

During his most recent absence, though, strange things had concerned the court. Maurading hordes had been terrorising the townsfolk, and a general air of something bad and niffy was inescapable, however much Daz you put in with your underpants. And when the good son Thor arrives back with a spangly new arm bangle, Mater and Pater fear the worst... No silly! I mean he's resurrected a magical object infused with the power of two great wizards of yore. Oh no, looks like one of the 'ancient-revived-curses-set-to-destroy-the-world' days.







THOR BLIMEY

Being a bit of a lad, and a Blur fan, Thor knows how to look after himself when out and about. His basic walking and fighting moves are easy to pick up, but there are several advanced attacks that may be learned, to devastating effect. Some of these are most effective against particular foes: a jumping swipe is perfect against flying creatures, for example.







▲ *The running swipe is awesome.*



▲ *The circular swipe can take out multiple targets.*



▲ *An athletic jumping kidney kick.*

WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN

The Story of Thor begins with a story — an animated introduction to the quest, with Thor's discovery of the armlet.









ory
of
or
he Light







MUM'S GONE TO ICELAND

Chances are you'll get a little peckish on your trek, more so if the opposition is knocking seven colours out of you. This where the wonderful invention of food comes in. Just eat it and feel much, much better. Food comes in lots of forms, from holey cheeses to garlic bulbs (Thor obviously has a plentiful supply of Gold Spot). The replenishing effect varies from foodstuff to foodstuff, with large meaty chunks doing the biz. Some nibbles have a different effect (see 'You Dirty Ratners')

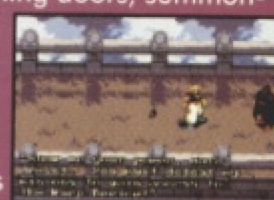






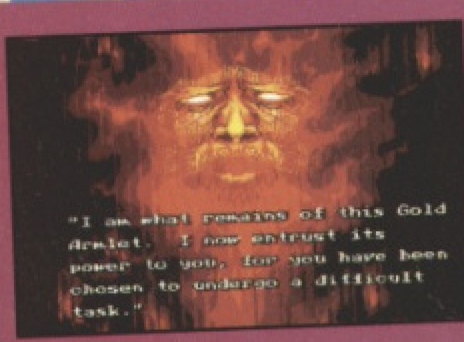
YOU DIRTY RATNERS

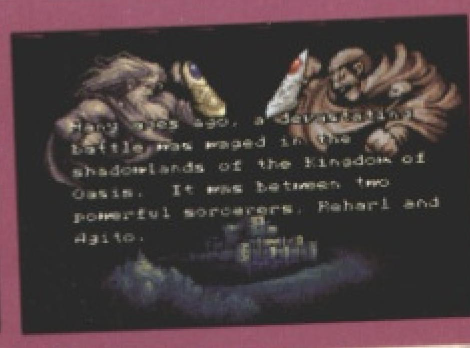
Thor's fetching new arm jewellry, the Gold armlet, is a potent piece of conjuring equipment. With it he can fire bolts of magical energy which have various effects; opening doors, summoning spirits, activating portals etc. However, the power of the armlet depletes gradually when in use. Sunlight will restore it's power, but this is not available in underground or indoor areas of the game. Some foods restore armlet power instead of Thor's health. Look out especially for the electric blue grapes.

















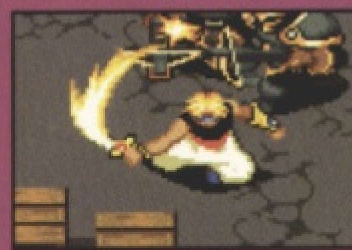
SHAFTED!

Thor easily fits the title of 'Man at Arms' as there is luscious range of weaponry to be collected during the quest. The standard piece of equipment is Thor's altknife, a small blade, but with infinite uses. Collectable weapons have limited uses, the weapons menu is used to skip between them and also tells you how many hits each has less. Weapons are arranged into classes (swords, bows, bombs etc) with different models of ascending power. Some of the best are well hidden in secret chambers, so you'd do well to look out for suspicious walls and doors.

BOW
(STANDARD, METAL, ATM, FIRE)



SWORD
(STANDARD, BROAD, DEATH)



BOMBS
(STANDARD, POWER, HYPER)





▲ *Seems like a nice boy.*





FAR TREK

Thor's journey takes him across forest, sea and mountain; through swamp and dungeon and admist eerie ruins and holy shrines. A small map with his location and next destination is always available. There is much more to the game than the areas shown here:

THE VILLAGE



Friendly townsfolk live at the port where Thor first disembarks, but they are of little more use.

ROYAL PALACE



Ma and Pa offer comfort and advice. There is also a library with clues enscribed in three books.

WATER SHRINE



The first complex to investigate. Dripping sewers and a trickt tidal passage. There's also a large and very hairy spider to confront.

WATERFALL



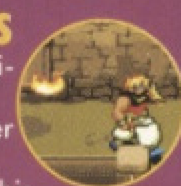
Much lies behind its tranquil waters. Explore the caverns of bats, snakes and zombies, to the fiery inner chambers and a horrifying skull boss.

SWAMP



Muddy waters and carnivorous fish fill this fetid area between levels.

SWAMP FORTRESS



The first collection of heavily-armoured knights of doom, throwing all manner of things from the battlements. Inside, Thor works his way to an underground jetty.

SHIP



The story takes Thor aboard a high seas vessels, crammed with enemies, with a further unexpected confrontation up on deck.

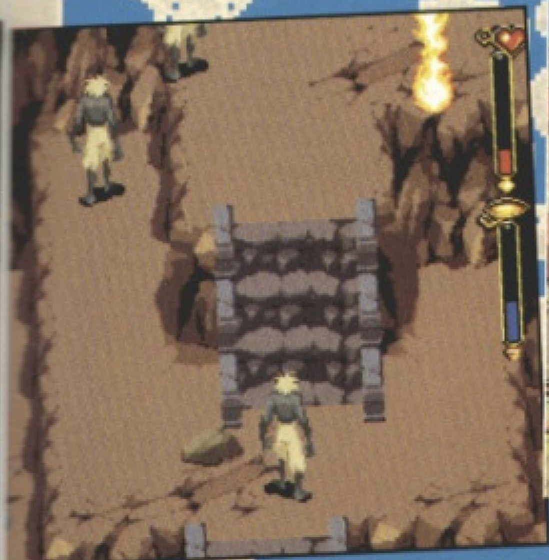
PROMONTARY



One of the most puzzling areas of the game, with a series of doors requiring keys. The zombie attacks intensify and a troublesome waterfall forms the centrepiece of the layout. The finale is a large rock monster, guarding the return passage to the surface world.







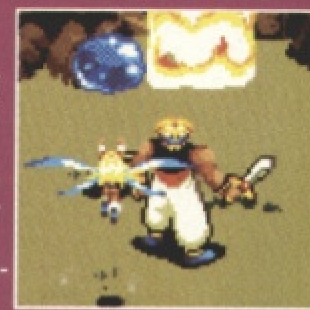


▲ *Looks like Gus' bit of Tottenham.*

SUMMONER'S TALES

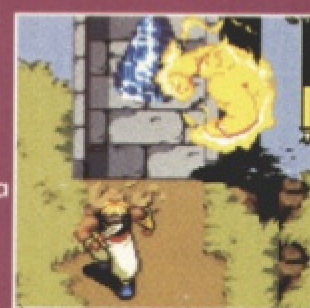
It's a long quest, but not always a lonely one, as you soon have spirit companions. The armlet grants you power over friendly elementals, which may be summoned to your aid. After finding the elemental in their shrine, they will instruct you on the summoning procedure, normally by firing the amulet on fire, water etc. Once summoned the elemental will shadow you, putting their won powers at your disposal. However, using their powers increases the drain on your armlet energy, so their presence is normally short-lived.

DYTTO



The water faerie, who has command over that element and the power to neutralise fire. She has power to heal Thor, freeze his enemies temporarily, or rage into a spinning aqueous tornado.

EFREET



Spirit of cleansing fire and a formidable friend. Efreet smashes through ice barriers and has three offensive powers: a fiery breath, a flaming torpedo and a blistering circular inferno.

SHADE



A lost spirit from another dimension, Shade looks creepy but turns out to be an invaluable friend. He'll catch you if your fall, reach out and strike your enemies and grasp distant objects.

CASTLE



A taxing series of chambers with intelligent spikes, wall spears and new opponents, including teleporting wizards. Inside and out, the action moves from the dungeons to the battlements.

MOUNTAIN FORTRESS



Within here lies the key to the mystery of the gleaming diamonds scattered around, but it's a secret protected by wind-powered traps and a truly monstrous guardian.



▼ *And yes, it is easy to fall to your doom.*







▲ *Dytto's water tornado.*



CHARIOTS OF FIRE

Like the last great Sega RPG (Soleil — just out — 91%) there's a little racing track included, although Thor's is quite well hidden. It's really a test of your control over the fire elemental, as you guide him through five laps of a closed circuits. Record-breaking times are rewarded with a food or item bonus.



▲ *Take to the track, and who knows what the trophy might be.*





▲ *Decked by Efreet.*



▲ *The spike trap.*

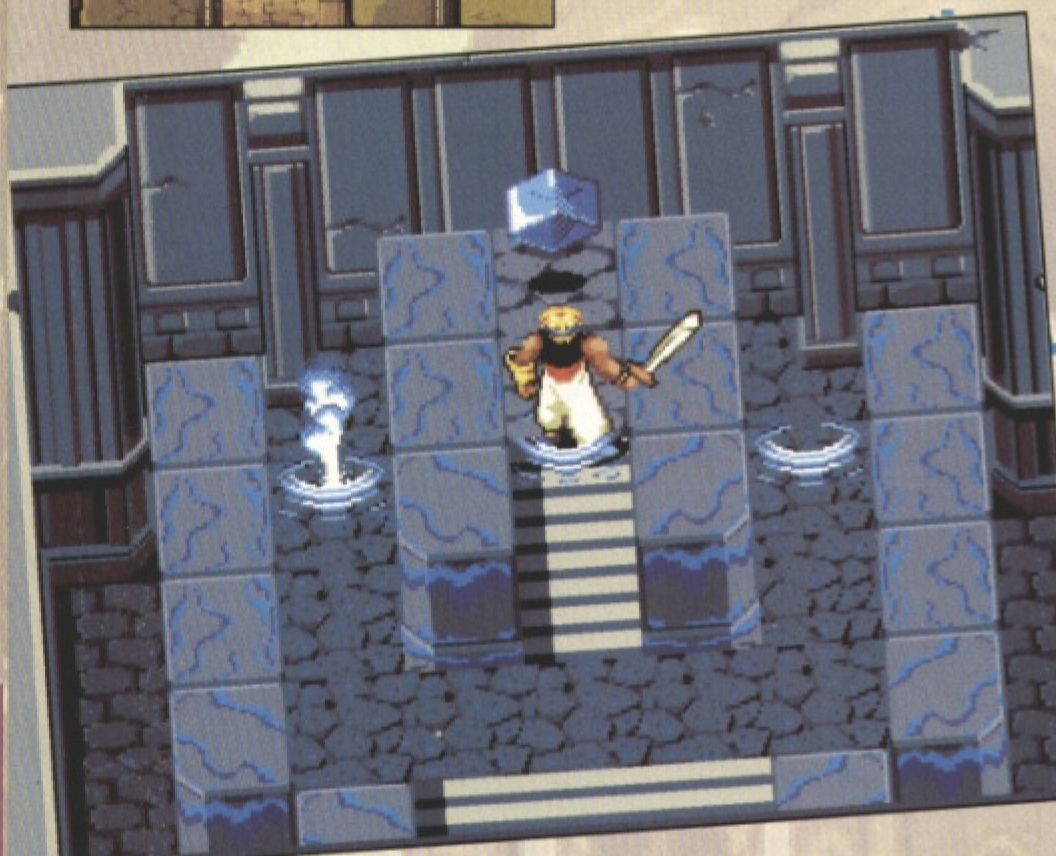


▲ *more tornado.*









HE SHOOTS, HE SCORES

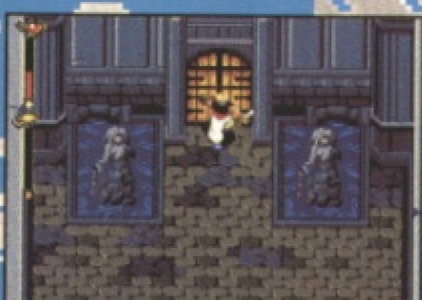
Thor's distinctive soundtrack hcs been created by Yuzo Koshiro, a familiar name to those acquainted with Megadrive music. Yuzo has won numerous awards for past works, like music for all the Streets of Rage games. With Thor he has attempted to create a movie-like score, with subtle themes that change in relation to the action, but not abruptly.

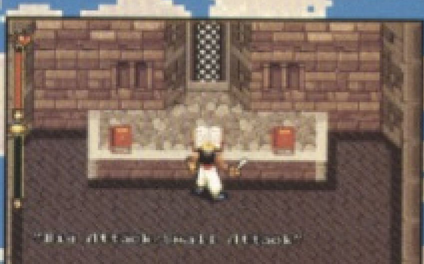






▲ How long will it take you to find this secret room?







COMMENT



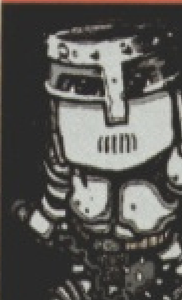
GUS

Thor has been in Ancient's workshop for some time, with only the occasional tasty screenshot issuing forth. Then suddenly the finished game comes our way, and it's obviously been a Labour of Love. I cannot recall a Megadrive game of quite so much quality and detail in a long time. Enormous work has gone into the character animation, not only for Thor himself, but all his adversaries. The locations are excellent and the range of weapons, combat attacks and elemental powers quite overwhelming. Ancient have succeeded in uniting the depth and choice of an RPG game with a constant supply of action, making Thor a true arcade adventure, backed with a strong storyline and gameplay that develops accordingly. The only factor that stops this scoring off the scale is the ease with which some areas may be cleared. Thor is perhaps a little too powerful with all his attacks, weapons, food and elemental aids when coupled with the restart points and battery save. Limiting the saving option to a few select points might have overcome this. That aside, this stands out like a jewel in the release schedule, and actually sets new standards in Megadrive adventures, notwithstanding excellent titles like Soleil and Landstalker.

▼ No time for paddling.



COMMENT



PAUL

When I initially heard reports of an Action RPG with all the depth of a major adventure to rival the Shining Forces and Landstalkers of this world, and a combat system more at home in Streets of Rage, I couldn't believe my ears. But here it is in all of its glory, and I have to say it is astounding! From the minute you pick up the joypad, there is an overwelming sense of solid gold quality. Thor's control is a dream, representing possibly one of the best animated RPG central characters to date. From the intensity of his multiple combo-style attacks, to the way in which he picks up an object, it is obvious that a huge amount of time has been spent in making this one of the best console RPGs ever. Location-wise you will be trudging through some superbly elaborate and carefully planned out dungeons. And as for the bosses, well what can I say except they are incredible in both their size and design. But as Gus points out, sections of the game are just too easy to get through without putting up too much of a struggle. Being able to save the game at any point may sound like an ace idea for frustrated RPG veterans, but it does detract from the playability. But this is only a minor niggle in what is otherwise a fantastic achievement.

▼ Your teacher is frankly a bit useless.



GRAPHICS

96

▲ Fantastic during every step of the quest. The character sprites are massive and well animated, with copious dazzling special effects to boot

SOUND

91

▲ Not perhaps the most immediate of Yuzo Koshiro's work, but complements the style of game perfectly. Brilliant spot FX.

PLAYABILITY

93

▲ From the very first skirmish, to the last and deepest dungeon, Thor is enthralling, challenging and everything a Megadrive classic should be.

LASTABILITY

89

▲ Many hours of play, many late nights all of it enjoyable and compulsive.

▼ Just too easy with the game set-up for endless continues.

VFM

90

▲ There is nothing that deserves your money more than Thor at this moment in time

OVERALL

93

Arcade adventures — don't ya just love 'em? Well, in the case of Thor it's amore at first sight. This is one hell of a game.

ROCK[...] MEGA[...]



1 PLAYERS	16 MEG

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

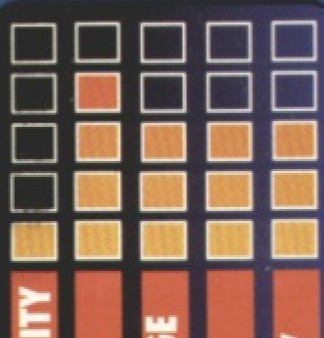
PRICE	TBA
BY	CAPCOM
RELEASE	IMPORT

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES:BATTERY SAVE
SKILL LEVELS:1
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD

1ST DAY SCORE
23,000

ORIGIN
An omnibus of Capcom's first three Rockman games, as they appeared on the NES some years ago.

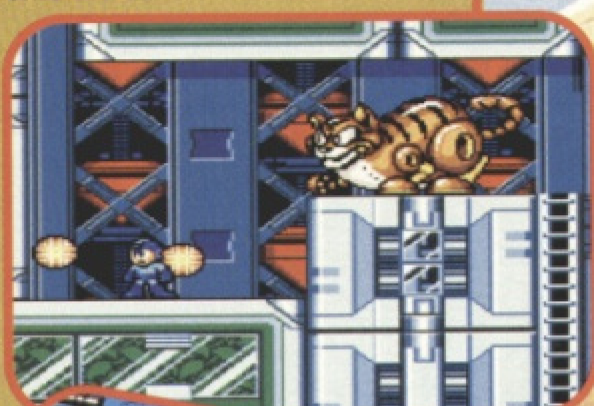
GAME BREAKDOWN

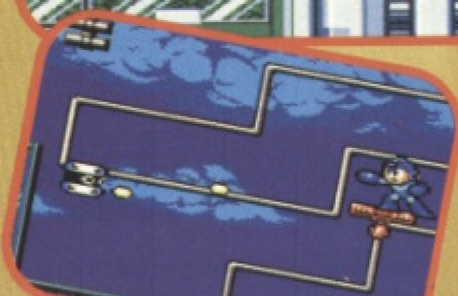


GAME AIM
Shoot and jump your way to the bosses of each Rockman stage.

It falls into the same league as Fawlty Towers videos, old episodes of Upstairs Downstairs and the Morecambe and Wise Christmas Special. The various adventures of Rockman (AKA Megaman) inspire the same nostalgia amongst games-players as certain TV shows do for a wide constituency of couch potatoes.

Or so Capcom think. This would explain why they've taken some of their oldest, and most successful games, and converted them authentically to the Megadrive. They must also be hoping that Rockman's charisma has transcended the old format frontiers, as until now he's been a character entirely in the service of the old enemy. Nintendo. However Megaworld, which is effectively a retrospective, is set to change all that, with no less than three Rockman adventures stuffed onto the cart.









MAN WORLD



TRIPLE CROWN



The front end of the game allows you to access any of the three Rockman games independent of each other. There are three separate RAM slots to save your progress, although you can restart any game level again and again. You are free to select the levels in any order.





▲ *Meet the Sega Power propeller head team...*



COMMENT



GUS

Megaman, sorry 'Rockman' for you sticklers, coming over to the Megadrive is like Morecambe and Wise abandoning the BBC for ITV (which they did in the 70s). In fact, they did it just when they got crap. Rockman Megaworld isn't crap, it's actually a faithful compilation of the first three games, slightly tarted up with more background detail and fuller musical scores. However the gameplay is a facsimile, and a facsimile of very old, very basic 8-bit platformers. It palls completely compared to the recent delights of Earthworm Jim, Headdy and Sparkster. The only incentive is size. With three complete and tough games, there is weeks of play in the collection. Some of the stages are also quite compulsive. But most gamers will feel they just taken a spin through the wrong end of a Tardis when they see Megaworld, making it the preserve of nostalgia freaks.

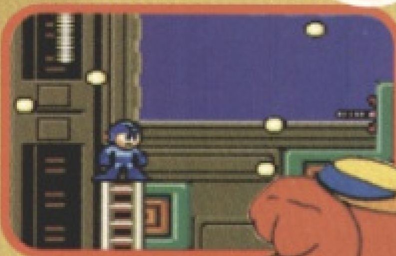
POWERS OF ASSUMPTION

Rockman can usefully assume the powers of each boss he defeats, and employ them in subsequent stages. This lends a strategic element to tackling the levels, as the early bosses' powers may come in useful. Pausing the game brings up the powers menu. There is limited energy for each power, but this is easy to replenish.

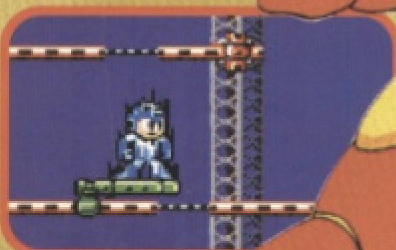


ROCKMAN 1

CUTMAN
The beginner level with lots of non-firing robots.



GUTSMAN
Tricky trap-door lifts are the first of many hazards.





ICEMAN
He cometh. Well you do, over a host of slippery chasms and chilly pools.



BOMBMAN
Futuristic cityscapes surround the bomb-throwing boss.



FIREMAN
Unsurprisingly most action here is of the molten metal variety, with fire sprite attacks.



ELECMAN
Face the raw power of the 50,000 volt boss in his gleaming metal lair.

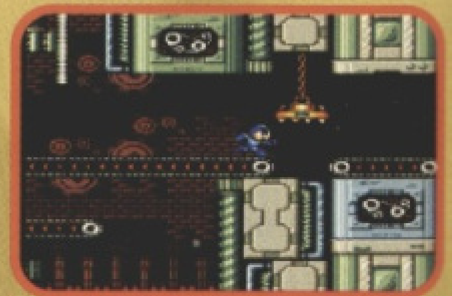


ROCKMAN

HEATMAN
Lava by the litre as you traverse disappearing platform stepping stones and his evil slinky henchpersons.

METALMAN
As you'd expect lots of late clockwork nights fathoming out his conveyor belted and ratcheted lair.







ROCKMAN



SHADOWMAN
Your common or garden hi-tech evil-doer until you reach the shadow globes, where all the lights go out!

MAGNETMAN
Uses the powers of electromagnetic induction to drag Rockman from his proper course.The underground section is a mess of wires.





SPARKMAN
More induction frolics in his large lair, with a series of twin pole arcing gates.

SNAKEMAN
No doubt as to his reptilian leanings with a snakeskin-lined nerve centre and serpentine sentinels.







COMMENT

STEVE

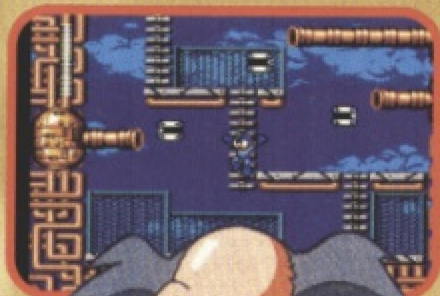
In converting their vintage hero to the Megadrive, Capcom have looked to the NES version for the graphics, whilst the gameplay is more akin to the better Game Boy title. Sadly, if Megaman has a fault it is that it has dated too much. Burst scrolling, stilting gameplay and unforgiving sprite detection is something long forgotten (thankfully), and whilst there's no doubting the variety, basic faults like these prove too annoying. Capcom probably saw this as a chance to mimic Mario All-Star's success, but it soon becomes obvious Rockman is a bit past it.

2

FLASHMAN
Sounding similar to Clash, but actually denizen at the centre of a crystalline labyrinth of gem baddies.



CLASHMAN
Lots of brown pipework here on an ascendant journey to a boss in the heavens.



BUBBLEMAN
Megaman's left gasping for air in this series of aquatic chambers.







AIRMAN
High-flying frolics set in cloudbound screens, with perilous leaps between facial platform



3

GEMINIMAN
Strange, the influence of birds and penguins for the wild card entry of Rockman 3.



HARDMAN
Rockman meets a rocky adversary. Bees and gorillas are just two types of his enlisted helpers.



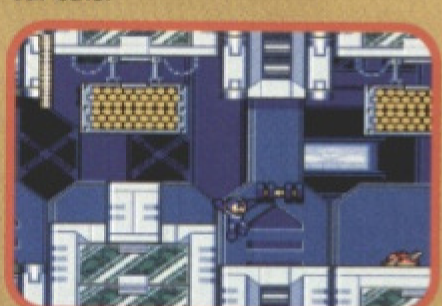
QUICKMAN
The boss likes to test your reactions with a series of instant-death laser gates to be avoided on each screen.



NEEDLEMAN
His penchant for sharp points only becomes apparent later on, with the spiky booby traps.



TOPMAN
Not the shop we all know and love(?) but a bizarre collection of nuts and bolts and fat mechanical cats.



WOODMAN
A level split between forest scenes and underground travails with fire-spitting dogs.



GRAPHICS
64

▲Crisp, complex backgrounds and plenty of variety across 24 stages.
-No great graphical FX, and all sprites are titchy. An 8bit feel.

SOUND
71

▲A constantly changing score over the game, always pounding in the background.
-No great sophistication to either music or FX.

PLAYABILITY
82

▲Simple and challenging. New powers to assume
▼Not an immense variety in things to do, and every enemy is predictable.

LASTABILITY
70

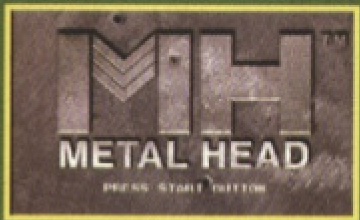
▲S'a toughie. Prepare to tear hairs from your head on some sections.
▼The interest level slips when the lack of variety becomes apparent.

VFM
84

▲Lots of game stuck onto a single cart. Compilations are a good idea for cash-starved gamers.
▼The games themselves are 8bit wonders at 16bit tariffs.

OVERALL
78

Capcom roll out the 'classics' but they're starting to look a bit like crusty ones. Plenty of levels to get your rocks off though.



1 PLAYERS

24 MEG

GAME TYPE
SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE	£59.99
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	MARCH

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: 5
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE

MISSION 3

ORIGIN

Metal Head is a polygon-engineered robotic search and destroy game set in a crowded urban environment.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM

Each mission has its own objective, but most involve the destructive power of your mech.

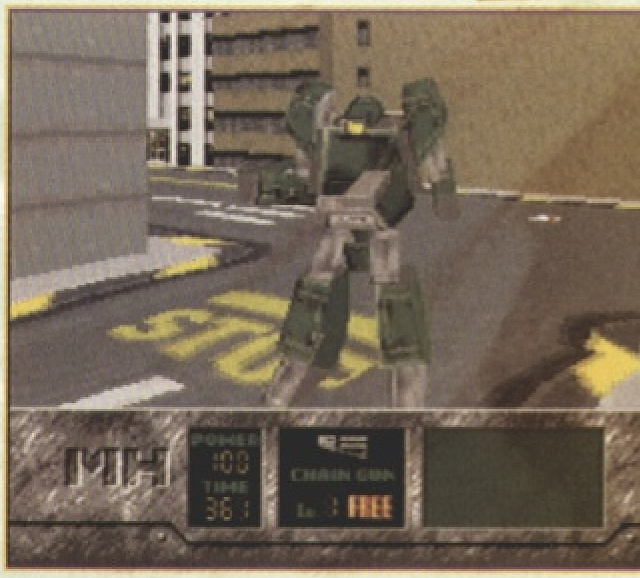


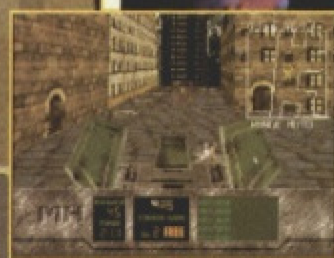
From jet liners to satellites terrorists are infamous for hijacking each new gizmo that science has developed for peaceful usage, and perverting them to deadly ends, limited only by their dastardliness and the effects budget of the next Bond movie.

It was the world's grave misfortune when a band of nasty types (you know, the kind that slap women across the face with the back of their hands and say 'silence!' frequently) got hold of a clutch of Mechs manually-controlled robotic heavy weaponry and march into the centre of the metropolis, effectively curtailing the January sales and bringing an end to civilisation as previously known. It is left to the Foundation for the Preservation of Shopping to rid the city of this menace so that the speed bumps and cardboard store detectives may be reinstated. And they've pitted you against the Keep Everyday Special mob by equipping you with your own Mech suit.

Reward? Isn't the happiness of mankind enough? Oh well, how's about enough air miles to get you well beyond Torremolinos?





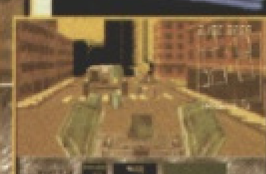


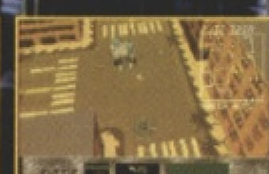
VIEW TO A KILL

In common with Sega's Virtua games, arcade and home, the game action may be viewed from a variety of angles, in this case four. The first view is from the cockpit of the Mech, with a centrally placed site. The second view is from a slightly lower position, bringing the Mech's two arms into view. View three is based on a shoulder-mounted camera that allows a greater range of vision, but the widest angle of vision comes from the bird's-eye positioned camera four.









THE MISSIONARY

The game features changing objectives, so missions do not become a simple matter of destroying everything in sight:



DESTROY ARMOUR

Take out all the Mech targets, with your own command launching a bomber attack which strafes two particular streets. Their bombing run is just as deadly to yourself.



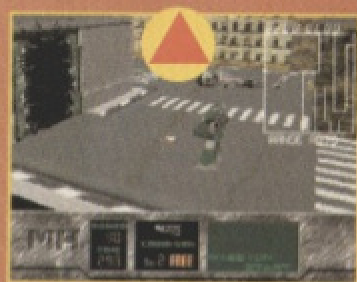






HELICOPTER ESCORT

You are ordered to guide a chopper with the necessary weaponry to destroy the entrance to the enemy base, while protecting it from enemy mechs.



INFILTRATION

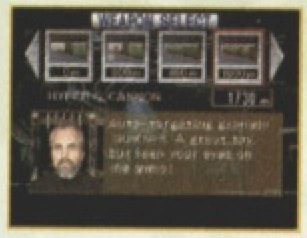
Inside the base you encounter a complete change of scene. Blast doors section off a labyrinthine complex which houses the reactor target. Finding the reactor chamber is a task best accomplished by careful cartography.



WHO WILL BUY?

Points are translated into prizes between rounds of Metal Head. Your score is an accumulation of kill points, time remaining and unused weaponry. The composite total may be spent at the armoury. This has a selection of weapons for both arms and special items. Hammer knuckles are close range attachments for either arm. Chain gun is the first stage of right-arm projectile weapons, which may be enhanced to mega laser status. Finally, specialities like flying mines or heavy armour are available, but at premium prices.







▲ ***Son robot gets his dad to come round and sort you out. Pity your pop is speccy mech.***



▲ ***Destruction can be fun — ask Saddam. And there's lots of it in Metal Head.***





RECONNAISSANCE

A twist on the destructive element of many missions. Here you are looking for the entry point to an enemy base and need a photograph of the door. A window in the top left corner of the screen records details of the vital portal. This leads to two further missions.



COMMAND VEHICLE

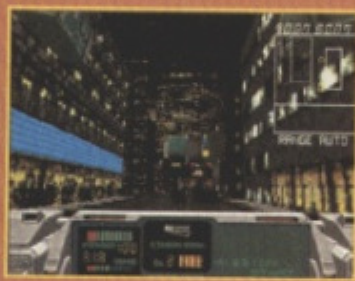
The enemy command is travelling in a highly armoured tank, which travels around the environs of the city. Locate and disable within the time limit.

SEE BY NIGHT

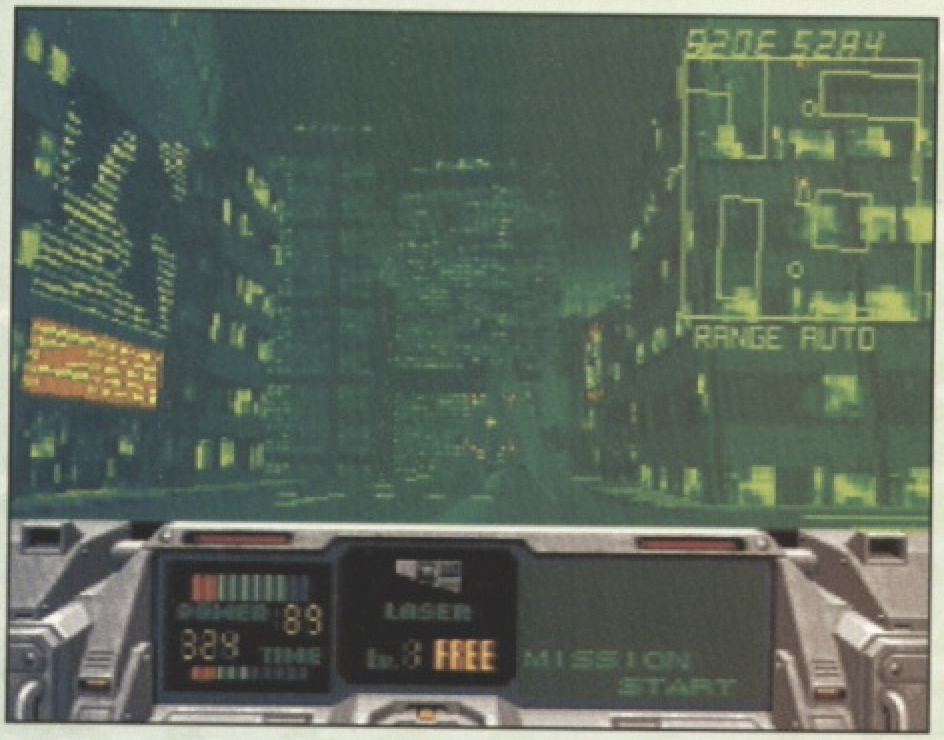
As dusk sets in on the further reaches of the city, you are forced to view the battle scene by the lurid tones of a night vision camera. By now the mechs have begun to hunt the hunter, and the pace of battle increases.





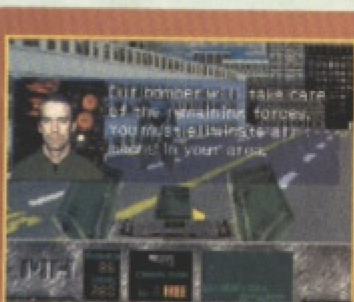


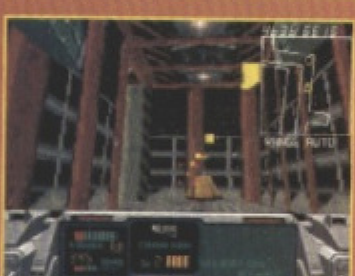
▲ *Never one to push that infamous media slut. Guess who Sega stick on a billboard...*

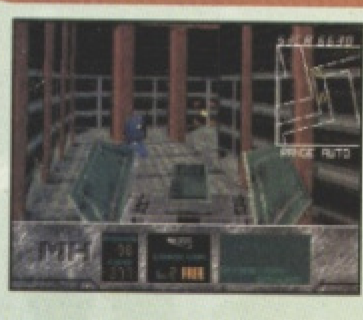


STREETS LIKE A JUNGLE...

One minor but noticeable feature is the scaling map. Targets are mapped as concentric circles, and the scale of the city map alters to encompass them. As you approach a target, the area covered by the map decreases to give you a clearer view of its position.









▲ *It may look like Elephant and Castle, but really this is urban warfare at its most white-knuckle. Elephant and Castle? People in Bath won't get that one, probably.*

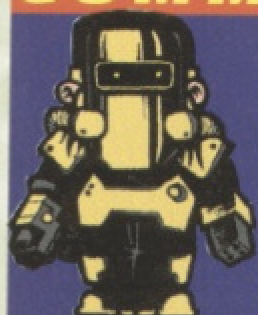
COMMENT



GUS

This is really the first game for the 32X that works with an original concept, and has no peer elsewhere. The launch games, and the abysmal Space Harrier/Afterburner turn were all based on previous titles. Metal Head is a brave attempt to utilise polygon power for tense urban warfare. For the most part it works well. The basic action is responsive and engaging, and missions have been considered as campaigns with changing goals, so the action doesn't become formulaic. technically, there are a few hiccups, with buildings appearing out of nowhere, and a characteristic blurredness that makes play occasionally confusing. But overall I was impressed with Metal Head's concept and execution, and would rate it as the next 32X game worth having.

COMMENT



STEVE

C-rash! Another film license hits terrafirma with a resounding crunch and wobbles off unceremoniously into the shadows of the greats. There's simply no hope for software houses that turn out stuff like this. Not that it's entirely bad because an extremely similar game named Turrican enjoyed some success. The point is, Turrican happened three years ago. This is now! UniSol tries to fob us off with the same dated gameplay and even retains the ridiculous transformation into a spinning buzz saw routine. It may juhnkiewfcnkJ woilaeliJ l3qoweoijlij

GRAPHICS — 88

▲ Smooth and fast-moving detailed polygon cityscapes that create a claustrophobic environment for the action, with substantial variety. Good mechs and interesting choice of

SOUND — 89

▲ So much sampled speech, before, during and after missions. Generally, the FX are good.
▼ Sad music which is too easy to ignore.

PLAYABILITY — 87

▲ Simple game design, with a sensibly set challenge curve. Missions form a 'story' rather than just follow on unconnected.
▼ A bit simplistic, and sometimes confusing on the eye.

LASTABILITY — 85

▲ The higher levels and later missions pose an adequate challenge for most players.

VFM — 83

▲ 24MEG of original action. Metal Head has the distinction of being both innovative and exclusive to the unit.

OVERALL — 87

A thoughtful shoot 'em up that shows the promise of the 32X. Technically sound and more than fun to get to grips with.

ROA RAS TOUR DE



1-2 PLAYERS | **16 MEG**

GAME TYPE
RACING

PRICE TBA

BY EA

RELEASE MARCH

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES:PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS:1
RESPONSIVENESS: OKAY
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIM

1ST DAY SCORE
REACH LEVEL 3

ORIGIN
Another update some two years after the sequel to Road Rash, EA's seminal and classic bike racing game.

GAME BREAKDOWN
ORIGINALITY
REFLEXES
CHALLENGE
ACTION
STRATEGY

GAME AIM
Beat the fourteen other competitors in each of the long winding courses. Use violence where necessary, and even where it's not.

This reviewer read that one in fifty motorcyclists will die in bike accidents. Frightening isn't it? And equally chilling is the cost of all that leather and Gore-tex, not mentioning the price for a helmet that will protect you from first-degree scrambled brains should you clip the wing-mirror of a Robin Reliant (or is it Reliant Robin?).

That's why more and more people are staying at home and playing Road Rash I and II (and now EA hope III). Millions of working days are being lost in the mistaken belief that your Megadrive will get you to the office more safely than your Kawasaki. But for those still brave enough to take to the real streets, we salute you, and offer our own indispensable guide to bike safety.

1) Always ride with your eyes open. This may seem ludicrous, but don't start humming the tune to Superstition or 'I just called to say I love you'.

2) Don't try and impress your mates by riding whilst doing an impression of George (the bloke with one arm) from the sitcom Robin's Nest.

3) Make sure your feet can touch the carpet. Sorry Prince. Or whatever you're called now.

4) Don't accept a lift from Billy Idol, Seal or Johnny (Leader of the Pack). Or share a bus with Gloria Estefan. Or Bucks Fizz.



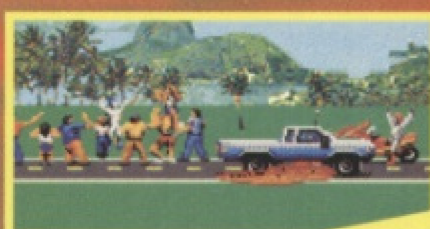
This looks more like an over 70's day out than a thrilling scrap on bikes.



The blue racer checks to see if his stabilisers are wobbling.

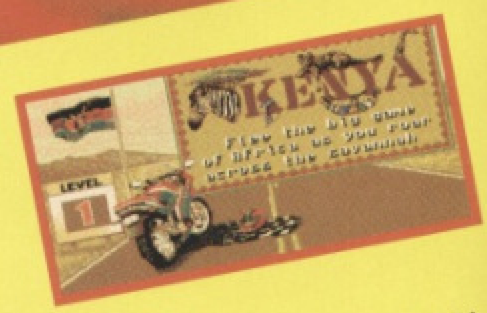
PUNCHLINES

One feature expanded on from Road Rash II is the little side-on sequences shown when you complete a race. A crowd of spectators greet your arrival, which is always followed by a comedy happening — evading the cops, getting splashed. The less well you have performed, the more humiliating the joke.



I'D LIKE TO BUY THE WORLD A BIKE...

Road Rash III bursts out of the narrow US confines of the first two games — hey, we live in a Global village now, and there's no urban speed limit. Each level of the game features five international tracks, each with their own distinctive scenery and hazards. Also, the side that the traffic drives on changes depending what country you are in.

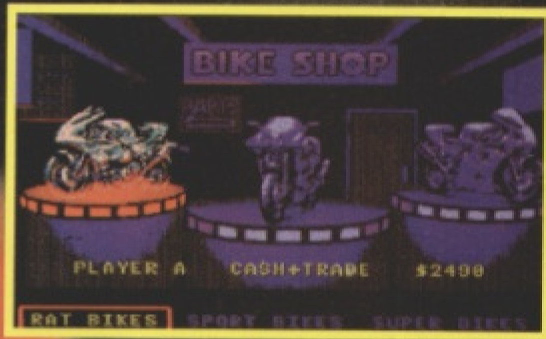


KENYA
Bumpy as you might expect, with a wide selection of wildlife interacting with the track. You are not pals with the WWF. (The conservationists, not the wrestlers).

D3
H3
FORCE

KEEN MACHINES SEGA

There are more bikes than ever before, and these are split into three categories: Rat (customised bangers for povvies); Sports (decent bikes for mortals); Superbikes (serious bikes for professionals with large wallets). As you progress, your fourteen adversaries get their tushes on better saddles, and if you don't raise the prize money to do also, you're going to look a bit stupid toddling along behind.



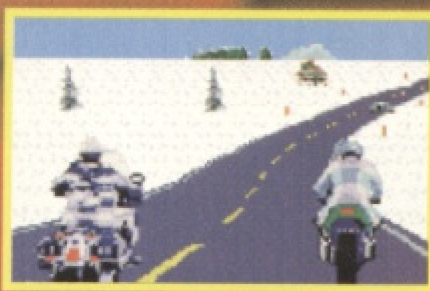
OINKY TONK

A celebrated feature of past Road Rashes has been, excuse the French, the Filth. There just as much in evidence in part three, with outriders patrolling almost every course. Different nations have police of varying persuasion (of course, you can't beat the friendly old British bobby) who levy varying fines. Unfortunately, they've also equipped themselves with a helicopter that busts you from overhead.





▲ *A series of reindeer dance for joy (not pictured).*

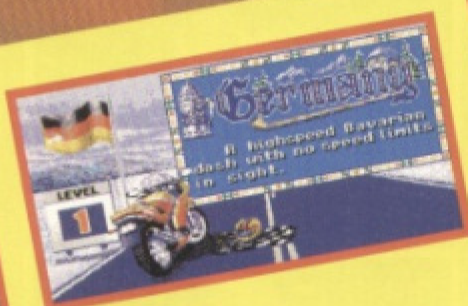


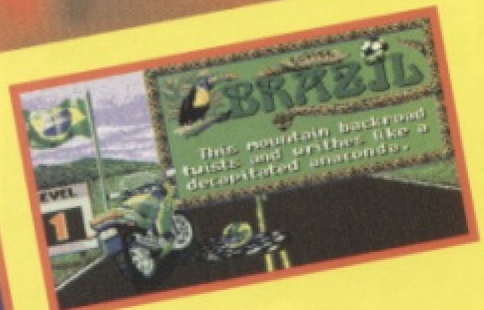
COMMENT



Well lordy me, I suppose we had been due this one. EA's updates have become a bit of a joke, but not one apparently shared by you punters who push them to the top of the charts every time. The fact is that no one has yet out-performed the Road Rash engine, and though this is a refined and faster version of the same, it's not that distant from Road Rash II. I'm disappointed that there aren't as many new features as I hoped for, but I still enjoyed playing it. The graphics are crisper, especially the player sprite which has been ported over from the 3DO, and the sound neatly matches the locations. But despite new bikes and more levels, I still prefer last year's Skitchin, which is a more effective variant on the road racing theme.





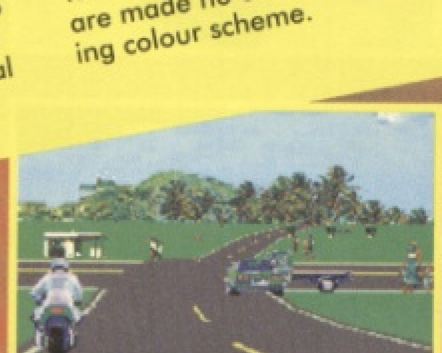


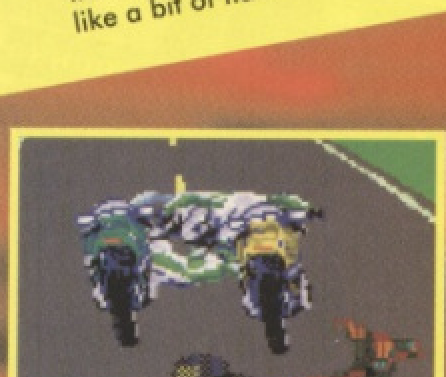
UK
This is meant to simulate the Isle of Man's famous TT race. That means that spectators stand too close to the track, and they charge rip-off prices at the local B&B. (jesting).

GERMANY
Set in snow-capped regions and slippery autobahns, these are torturously twisting tracks that are made no easier by the blinding colour scheme.

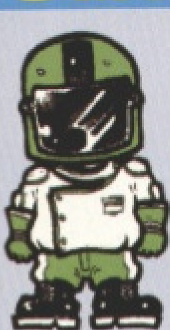
BRAZIL
Tropical conditions, so you must be getting hell of a sweaty. There's a preponderance of makeshift ramps by the side of the track, since these latin types like a bit of flair.

That must be the Crossroads Motel over there. I wonder if Meg Mortimer fancies a ride? ▶





COMMENT



STEVE

Well, the bike is the same sprite used in the 3DO, but that's where any similarities to the CD game end. Road Rash III is more of the same, with the expected new bikes and locations, and a few extra things to avoid or punch, but it doesn't do that over the second game. It's still as playable as ever, and the graphics are notably larger than before, but the colours seem dreadfully washed out giving Road Rash III the same unimpressive look Skitchin' suffered from. I imagine there are very few people new to the Road Rash series and if there are then this is the best introduction possible, but for the rest of us Road Rash II and Skitchin' are more than worthy substitutes. Not bad, it just seems tired now — time for a rethink if another sequel's on the way methinks.

HEDGEHOG-FLAVOURED SNACKS

One educational aspect of Road Rash III is it lets you see all sorts of wildlife in its natural habitat, and lets you hear the sound animals make when they get run over. This is one truly sick part of the game, with deer, zebra and giraffes innocently crossing the freeway. Also, look out for the smutty cattle.



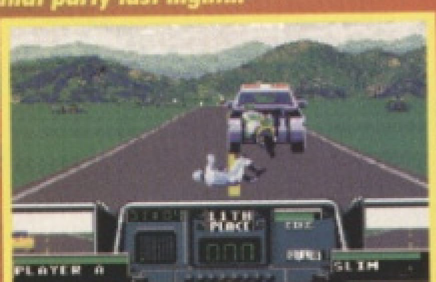




▲ Ooh, just what was I drinking at that party last night...

▲ £4500. Or £7.50 over 99 weeks. Bikes Freemans style.







▼ One of these will end up in dog food. Guess which one.











GRAPHICS — 79

▲ Fast 3D, with more roadside detail and variety between courses than before
▼ A slight jerkiness in the frame update that takes getting used to.

SOUND — 76

▲ The music and FX change for each country.
▼ It's often sad Megadrive Metal for people with acne and Bon Jovi T-shirts.

PLAYABILITY — 85

▲ The old magic is still there. The beat 'em up aspect is always fun.
▼ It's a bit dated, next to the thrills of Ridge Racer and Daytona.

LASTABILITY — 81

▲ Road Rash III is the hardest of the series. More depth than the other two and a good two-player option.

VFM — 74

▼ The other Rashes can be picked up for much less, and Skitchin offers more originality.

OVERALL — 82

It's still ticking over, but this is one engine that needs to be stripped down next time, and not just overhauled.

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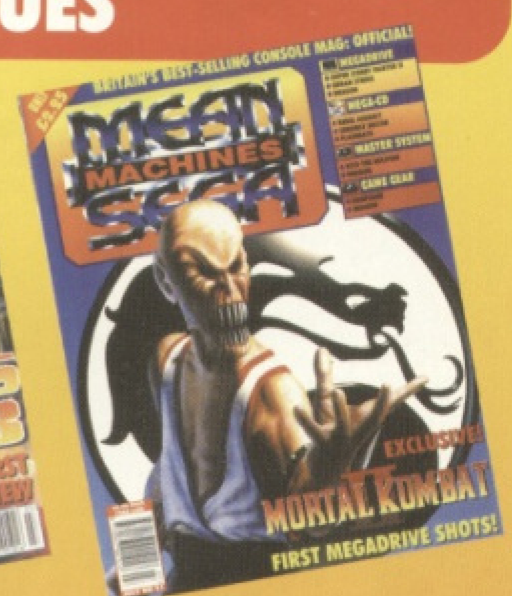
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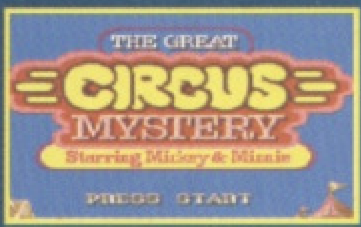
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THE GREAT CIRCUS MYSTERY
STARRING MICKEY & MINNIE



1-2 PLAYERS

16 MEG

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

PRICE IMPORT

BY CAPCOM

RELEASE OUT NOW

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: IFFY
GAME DIFFICULTY: AVE

1ST DAY SCORE
REACH COWBOY LAND

ORIGIN
Blah, blah, blah, 65 year-old rodent, guffaw, blah, blah, you know all this already, blah.

GAME BREAKDOWN

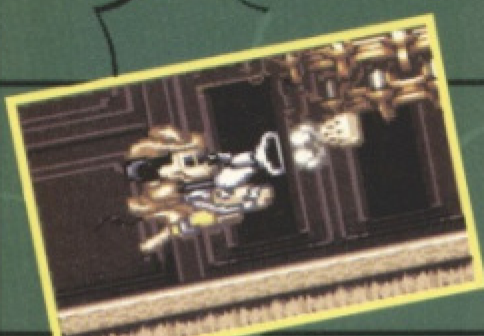


GAME AIM
Work out why the circus has gone. Apparently.

Such is the low intelligence of cartoon characters, when Mickey and Minnie decide to go to the circus and it isn't there as expected they figure there's a mystery to be found somewhere. It doesn't occur to them that the intro sequence shows Mickey apologising for being so late and that it could have just moved on. Oh no, there's a fiendish reason behinds it disappearance somewhere deduces Minnie.

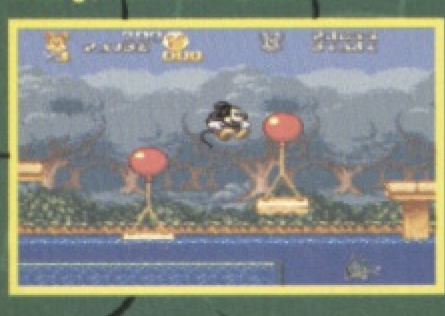
Thus, a-leaping and a-running, Mickey and Minnie traverse Capcom's platformfest, changing into an assortment of designer outfits left to aid their sleuthing, and bouncing on more bosses than a company secretary at an office Christmas party. Our greatest mystery about circuses, though, is what do teenage girls find so fascinating about the blokes who work on the bumper cars? I mean, sleeveless T-shirts and armpit hair down to their toes is hardly the stuff Mills'n'Boon write about is it...



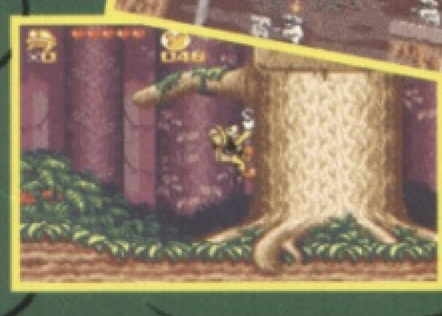


▼ *Mickey hopes they won't split. It could get him into trouble.*

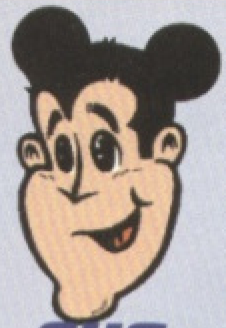








COMMENT



GUS

As Disney things are a licence to print money, everyone wants a slice of the action. This rubs shoulders with Mickey Mania, and the Legend of Illusion games, and Hi-tech plan to bring out Mickey's Ultimate adventure here too. But a company like Capcom could be expected to provide a more stimuating offering than they do here. Circus Mystery is very much a retread of the Magical Quest game: beautiful graphics, relatively easy action and Mickey put through a variety of costume guises, Mr Benn-stylee. It all adds up to less than a purse of kippers when compared to the radical platform antics of Earthworm Jim and co. I know, we mention them in just about every platform game evaluation, but less face it, they are now the standard. This isn't, however pleasant, anything to shake up the platform consensus.

BOX OF DELIGHTS

Punctuating the levels are a series of marked blocks. These act for the most part as platforms, but others have other useful properties. In time the-honoured tradition, these include:

GREY BLOCKS: Yer basic, run-of-the-mill, ordinary platforms.



GOLD BLOCKS: Climb on 'em or throw 'em — the decision is yours.



RED BLOCKS: Same as the gold ones, but reappear after use.



SWING BLOCKS: Use these to... yes, swing, to a higher plane.



TIME BLOCKS: Freeze the timer, funnily enough.



STAR BLOCKS: When thrown, these zing around the screen for ages, killing all in their path.



ARROW BLOCKS: Moves in the direction of the arrow.



TREASURE BOXES: Goodies galore when the ring is pulled. Young man!



COMMENT



STEVE

My, the platform game has come a long way in the past year or so. Whilst we now take the likes of EWJ for granted in terms of state-of-the-art animation and content, it is only when mediocre efforts such as Circus Mystery come along that we truly appreciate how lucky we are. In all honesty, there's nowt massively wrong with Mickey and Minnie's latest outing, but Mickey Mania does it all so much better, making this look very tired and derivative. Circus Mystery has some great ideas in it (the hook swings and costume changes, for example), but it is very formulaic and patterns tend to emerge very quickly for disposing of bosses — and it uses burst scrolling which is unforgivable. The Megadrive is swamped with decent platformers, and with EWJ and The Lion King at the top of most people's buy lists, I doubt if Mickey's latest escapade will appear on many shelves.

GRAPHICS

▲Attractive sprites and backdrops, and a wide variety of colourful and detailed bosses and backdrops.
▼The use of burst scrolling is

79

SOUND

▲Twiddly-diddly-biddly tunes.
▼ Extremely farty effects.

65

PLAYABILITY

▲ Getting to grips with the costumes is fun, and there are some neat level twists and hidden bonuses.
▼ The controls are often a bit

72

LASTABILITY

▲ Moderately taxing, and three difficulty levels.

70

VFM

▼ Uh-uh. Sorry, but there are dozens of better platformers than this.

68

OVERALL

66

Two years ago this would have been fine. Nowadays it looks as creaky and dated as Michael Mouse himself. A senile old fart of a platformer.

SUITS YOU, SIR

Mick and Min bump into a few of their equally-old cartoon chums along the way, and are offered a variety of costumes to help them on their way. The collected outfits can be worn at any time, and the rodent duo modestly change behind a handy curtain — thankfully, as I'd hate to think what a pensionable mouse's bum looks like. and here we have our models wearing...

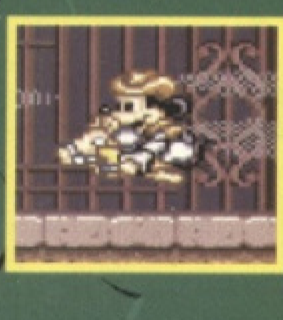
SWEEPER: From the Donald Duck collection, this beautifully tailored blue suit comes with a handy vacuum cleaner which is handy for sucking up bad guys. Extra batteries line the route for maximum fashion efficiency.



SAFARI: Safari, so goodie as Christopher Biggins used to say. When he was working and not allegedly nicking batteries. With hooks attached to the lovely khaki cuffs, these make climbing vertical inclines and swinging from convenient-ly-placed circlets a cinch.



WESTERN: Including a full hobby-horse and pop gun ensemble, these crucial cowboy clobbers also endow our heroes with fast-paced running skills — also known as 'The Desperado Dash.' Well, we did warn them about the beans...





1-2 PLAYERS

16 MEG

GAME TYPE
BEAT EM UP

PRICE	TBA
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	FEBRUARY

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES:PLENTIFUL . OH YES
SKILL LEVELS:8
RESPONSIVENESS: SLOOOOW
GAME DIFFICULTY:
AVE

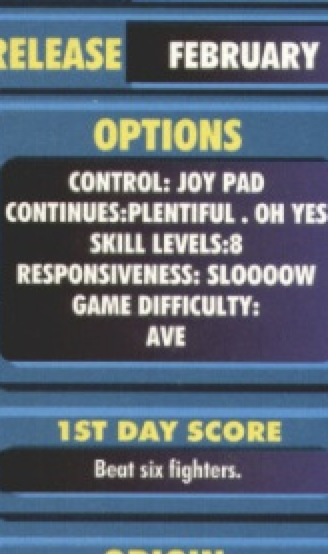
1ST DAY SCORE

Beat six fighters.

ORIGIN

SNK's sword-wielding coin-op makes a belated debut courtesy of Sega.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM

Slice your opponents into sushi. Or kick them to death. Whatever.

SAMU SHOD

It was a time of heroes... Yep, these and countless other martial arts movie cliches are continued in Sega's conversion of SNK's Samurai Shodown coin-op. In addition to slow-motion fight scenes, OTT opponents, and a dreadful soundtrack, Shodown also manages to cram in all manner of deadly weapons and pets. Just for the kiddies, like.

Basically, Samurai Shodown is Street Fighter with swords. And pets. Within a strict time-limit, the main aim is to reduce your foe to the size of a dozen stock cubes using whatever special moves you have mastered. If not, he'll do it to you and you'll end up looking like a pile of mince. And that's it. Expect a sequel set in the months between June and August, though. It's called Summery Shodown. Titter.



▼ *Amakusa falls for the old' here, smell this flower' jape.*





▲ *DIY appendix removal, Samurai style.*

THAT'S FIGHTING TALK

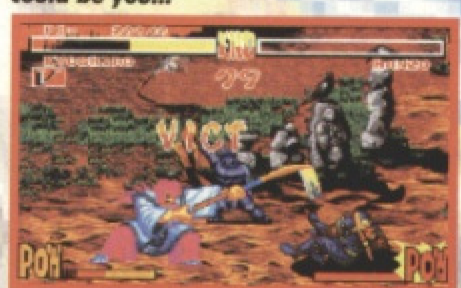
Samurai Shodown's eleven fighters are a motley bunch, each of whom has differing skills. In addition to the usual Ninjas, mutants and fat blokes, there's a guy called Galford who has a dog which mucks in and bites people (it's called Poppy, so that must mean he has 'Poppy Power.' Suit yourself), whilst Nakoruko has winged help in the shape of an eagle. Similarly, mucho swords, knives and throwing stars are in order as the player traverses the world, duffing people up, avoiding bombs lobbed by passers-by, and chopping up the straw dollies which appear in the bonus round. Oh yeah, and there's also this cool bit where the two fighters lock weapons and whoever taps the attack button the fastest knocks the other's weapon out of their hands.







▲ Lottery fever gets everywhere. It could be you...



COMMENT



GUS

I don't care much for Neo Geo games, which are usually 99MEGS of graphics and 1MEG of gameplay, but I didn't find Samurai Shodown too bad compared with comparable Megadrive beat 'em ups. The graphics are lovely, despite losing the scaling, and some of the ideas like the vicious pets almost verge on the original. My main complaint is the sluggishness of the characters. If the game had been faster, this comment could have been quite different, but as it stands, SS is not an A-grade combateer.

COMMENT



STEVE

The original NEO GEO version of this weighed in at a mighty 100MEG, so it was obvious a few odds and ends would be lost in the conversion to the Megadrive. As such, the sprites are smaller, Earthquake is missing, and the zoom mode of the original is on the scrap heap. Sadly, most of the animation and speed of the NEO GEO game has gone, too, leaving a very average beat 'em up which will line up alongside Art Of Fighting and King Of The Monsters in the conversion route to obscurity. Samurai Shodown is a fast-moving beat 'em up which, whilst very derivative, has enough novelty value and playability to make it worth investing a few quid. In this conversion, though, the moves are sluggish and a little hit'n'miss and this makes the game a bit of a chore to play. Basically, there is a lot of wasted potential here and I doubt if even die-hard fans of the coin-op will persevere with this.



RAGE HARD

How many times have you played a beat 'em up only to find you can clock it by repeating a set process? Samurai Shodown attempts to thwart anysuch actions with the addition of a 'Rage' bar. Every time your opponent concedes silly hits or damage from a set pattern, a bar at the bottom of the screen begins to grow. When it is completely full, the niggled character flushes bright red and becomes more aggressive than before — similarly, their hits are also twice as harmful than before. Still, you know what happens when you tease someone too much...



GRAPHICS — 78

▲ Colourful sprites and backdrops, which are brilliant — until they move.
▼ Sparse animation, and no real flow to the proceedings.

SOUND — 17

▼ The worst music. Period. No, really, the music in this is simply foul. The effects are crap, too.

PLAYABILITY — 68

▲ A modicum of enjoyment to be gained from the special moves.
▼ It's too hit'n'miss to be taken seriously.

LASTABILITY — 53

▼ Despite the wide range of fighters and locations, and the ten skill settings, this just isn't exciting enough and rarely proves addictive.

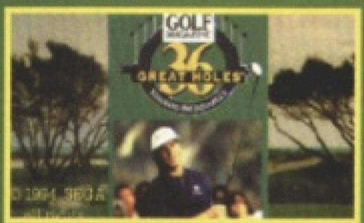
VFM — 57

▼ There are better beat 'em ups around. Have you ever heard of MKII?

OVERALL — 61

Not completely awful, but too flawed to recommend and a very average coin-op conversion.

GOLF MAGAZINE 36 GREAT HOLES



1-8 PLAYERS

12 MEG

GAME TYPE
SPORTS

PRICE TBA

BY SEGA

RELEASE MARCH

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: BATTERY SAVE
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: OKAY
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
6 OVER PAR

ORIGIN
Endorsed by America's Golf magazine, and concerning the ancient game of stick and ball originated at St. Andrews.

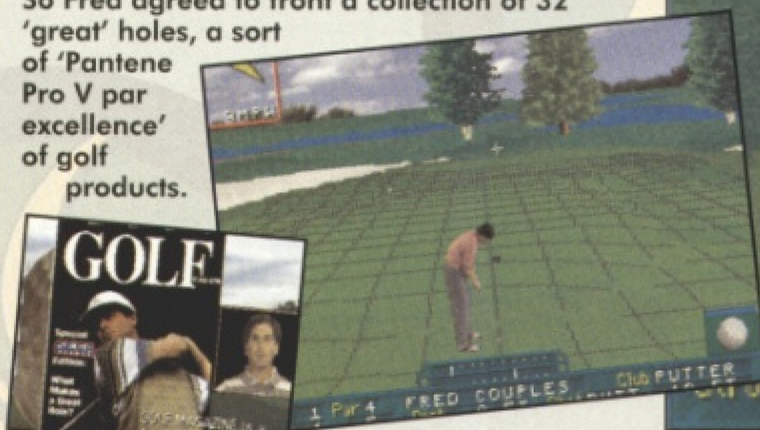
GAME BREAKDOWN

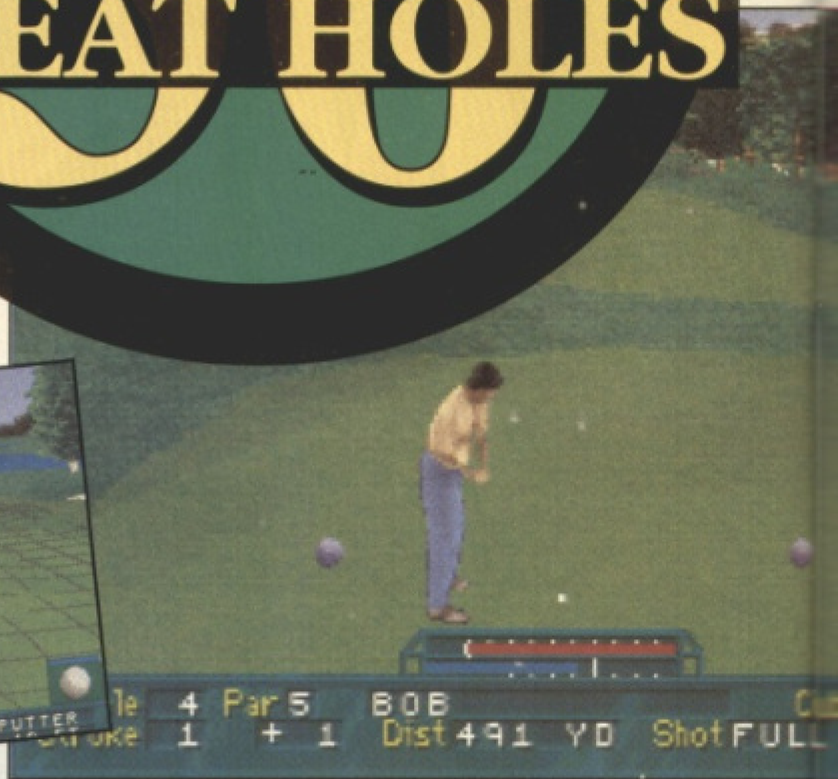


GAME AIM
Cover a set series of holes (1-36) in as few strokes as possible, with other minor game variations on offer.

With a name like Fred Couples, he was all set to be a game show host. Perfect for the likes of the long defunct Mr and Mrs (be nice to each other). The catchphrase was ready and waiting: "I'm Fred Couples, now let's bring on the couples".

But instead, Golf became the career path of the mysterious Fred (well, mysterious to us on this side of the Atlantic). The slacks and V-neck pullovers were regulation game show, but the setting was pastoral and the action fast and furious. Well, fast and furious compared to putting Ethel in a soundproof box with a pink frilly blindfold on. And it came to pass that even slacks-wearers were buying Sega's new subversive console add-on, the 32X. And they fancied a next-generation stroll on some choice greens and fairways. So Fred agreed to front a collection of 32 'great' holes, a sort of 'Pantene Pro V par excellence' of golf products.

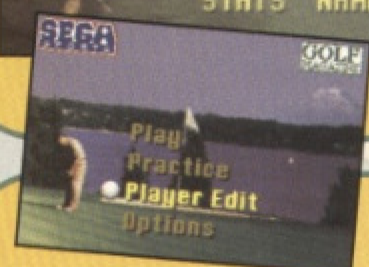




TROLLEY DASH!



Before you start knocking balls, you must define your player. The battery save is capable of storing dozens of your created golfers, and also recording the statistics of their performance whenever you play with them. First, a series of mugshots of cosmetically-challenged men and woman are offered, then a potentially lethal choice of tops and bottoms in the apparel department. You can also have a rummage in the contents of their golf bag; select your allowed fourteen clubs from the range available; even change shaft and head materials. Lastly you select your tee colour. This determines which of the four tees you commence from. Picking the red (nominally the 'Ladies' tee) brings you a lot closer to the hole than the blue or black.

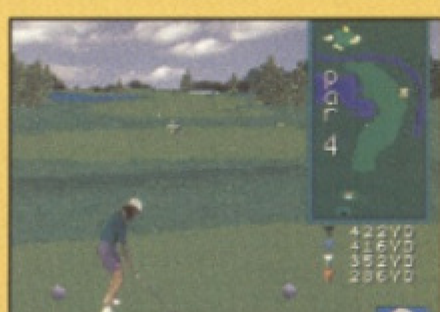


ADDRESS YOURSELF

Preparing the shot or 'addressing the ball' is an important procedure for the perfect shot. The following functions should be used before you swing it:

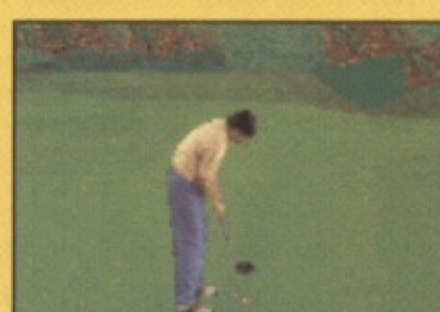
MAP

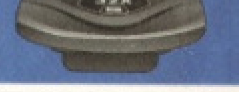
Reveals your position relevant to the hole.



STANCE

Affects 'draw' and 'fade', a bending effect similar to hook and slice but here deliberately induced.





TWO COURSES, NO COFFEE

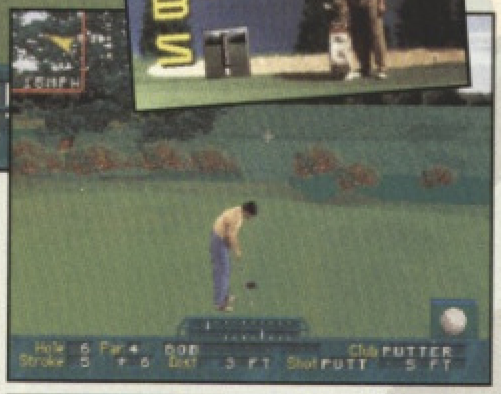
The 36 holes on the cart are cherry-picked from some of America's top courses, giving a good mix of short and long, woodland, links and desert courses. Some noticeable attractions are those with island greens set upon huge water hazards.
Derivations of play are offered with Fred's favourite holes, a long 18, short 18, toughest holes ('The Gauntlet') and an option to create a custom course of any length.













PGA TIPS

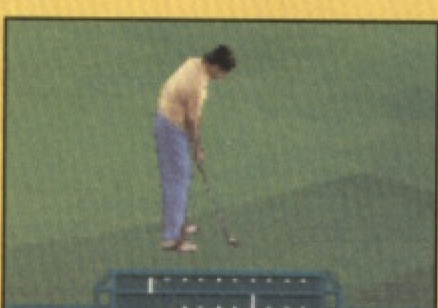
The swing mechanism is almost identical to that of EA's PGA series, reinforcing the noticeable similarities between the games. One button tap starts the power meter, another stops it at the desired amount, then a final press is required to time the swing to avoid hook (bend to the left) or slice (bend to the right).



▲ *Olderst swinger in town.*

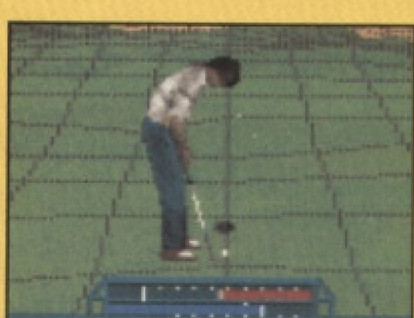
POSITION

Alters the distance from which you actually hit the ball.



LIE

Vital on the green, but you can look at the ball lie anywhere on the course.



COMMENT



GUS

Yet another one to add to my collection of famous Freds, but the game Mr Couples fronts isn't as illustrious as we might have hoped. Despite the potential of the 32X, the graphics are surprisingly drab, fuzzy and unexciting. Mottled greys and greens exist where crisp trees and lush grassy textures should have made this the best looking golf game by some distance. In reality, I can see very little difference between this and previous PGA games on the Megadrive. Apart from the limited commentary, it's even inferior in terms of sound to PGA III! The player customisation is good, but the real letdown is the lack of holes. 36 just doesn't compete with the incredible 144 up for grabs on PGA III. Okay, these are 'choice' holes, but they're not my choice. 36 Great Holes is barely on par with most Megadrive golf games, but it's not the 'next level'. Wait and see what Tee-Off has to offer.

COMMENT



STEVE

Well, the animation is very nice, the courses are detailed and varied, and there are enough options to keep golfers happy. But, despite all these, 36 Great Holes still doesn't compare to the likes of PGA III. It isn't a bad game by any chalk, and it pushes what the 32X can do, but I still came away unimpressed. The problem lies in that it doesn't feel like a 32bit game, and bearing this in mind, I'm in the queue behind Gus for `Tee-Off.

GRAPHICS

75

▲ Good player animation, and some holes where the subtle colourings work well.
▼ Huge unexploited potential — animations, more colour, camera angles. A dull-looking game.

SOUND

68

▼ Not much in the way of sound or music, despite the occasional comment or birdsong.

PLAYABILITY

77

▲ Playing as a group can be entertaining and, not any less playable than most golf games...
▼ Lacks features and depth that the unit might have provided.

LASTABILITY

68

▲ Recording the stats of your created players is good news.
▼ 36 holes is well below the count of comparable golf simulations.

VFM

65

▲ Not a serious improvement on EA's three year old standard, and that's now much cheaper.

OVERALL

73

Not that bad in its own right, but the golf games for your Megadrive are every bit as good.

KAWASAKI CHALL

Kawasaki Superbike Challenge

1-2 PLAYERS | **16 MEG**

GAME TYPE
RACING

PRICE £39.99

BY TIME WARNER

RELEASE TBA

OPTIONS

CONTROL:JOY PAD
CONTINUES:PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS:4
RESPONSIVENESS:AVERAGE
GAME DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE

1ST DAY SCORE
N\A

ORIGIN

Domark stormed the world of racing games with the highly successful F1 a couple of years ago and they now make the jump from cars to bikes.

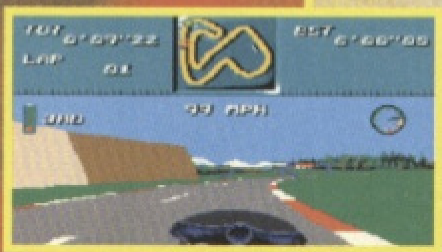
GAME BREAKDOWN



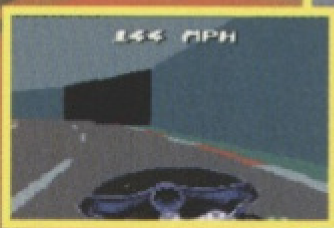
GAME AIM

Equal the mastery of Barry Sheene on the world's circuits without relying on the planet's metal resources to keep your legs in one piece.

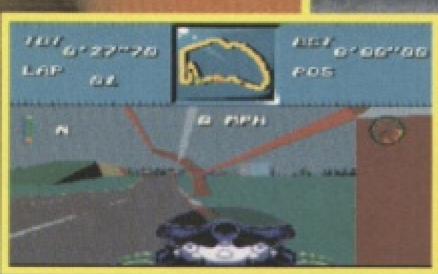


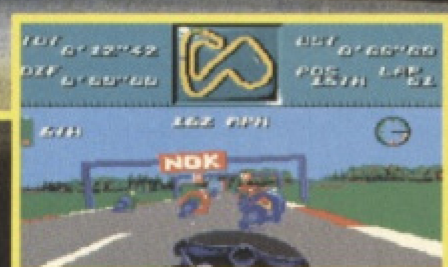


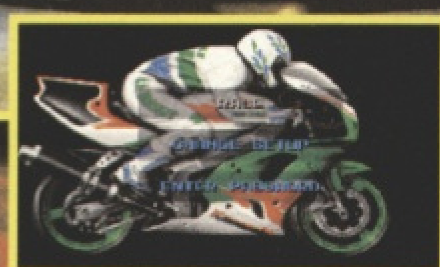
Zulus! Thousands of them. Sadly, you can't see them because we've passed them.



Any time is a Little Chef time...







It was a time for heroes. Man and machine fused in a gleaming high velocity mass of chrome, steel, leather, and flesh. Travelling at speeds in excess of 150 mph on death-defying courses, danger was something you ate for breakfast, and then went back for seconds! Glamourous über-babes wilted over the mounted masked knights of this golden era, saluting them in their race towards stardom, but ditching them when they can home in traction. Oh yes, the halcyon days of the 1970s and the glorious sport of racing silver dream machine Superbikes.

Lately the sport has been going through something of a renaissance, attracting a whole new generation of budding Barry Sheens. The likes of Scott Russell are zooming around the world's circuits sponsored by major manufacturers. So to reflect this new found popularity, Domark have teamed up with Kawasaki to produce the Superbike equivalent to their excellent hit of a few years ago. Hop on your bike and get your motors running.

DODGY CIRCUITRY

It's a long way to the top of the championship table. In all, 15 tracks have to be successfully completed to claim the title of Superbiker. Not only are you going to be chewing a lot of tarmac, but also jetsetting across to some of the world's most exotic and weathertorn locations. Each track has its individual weather conditions—all of which must be taken into consideration when selecting gear ratio and tyre type pre-race. Any track is selectable for the odd practise session or two, and you can even have your very own mini championship by selecting any number of the circuits.

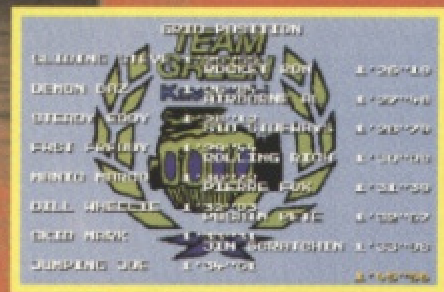


SUPERBIKE
LENGE



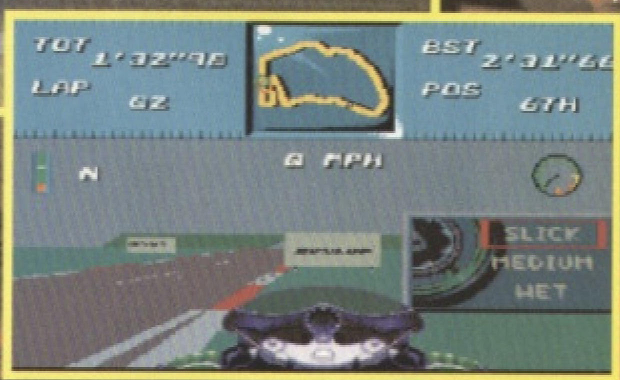
START YOUR ENGINES, PLEASE

Aside from your everyday race against the world champions of superbikes, you can also select a number of other play options. First off if you fancy a boost to your performance, you can select the turbo option and whizz around the selection of tracks at a higher velocity. If this isn't your thing then you can always plump for the mano e mano race with the CPU, or alternatively opt for the split-screen race against a chum. There is the opportunity to raise or lower your rank in the championships. The default setting is amateur, but there's always the added challenge of the expert bikers.

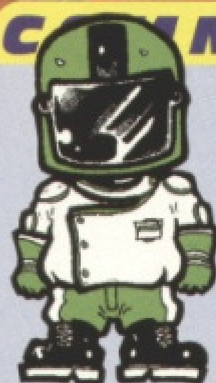


THE PITS

Damaged bike? Need to change your tyres for different weather? Feel like trying your hand at manual gears? What you need is the pit-stop. Once you've entered the area the choice is yours via a selection of options menus. Remember a few seconds in the pits could save you valuable time in the rest of the race.



COMMENT



PAUL

On first appearances Kawasaki looks a touch dodgy. I mean let's face it the colour palette and the blocky and jerky graphics aren't anything groundbreaking. But beneath this facade lies a nicely playable racing game with a substantial amount of surprises. Obviously a great deal of time and effort has gone into the feel of the game—small differences in weather have a subtle but often dangerously slidey effect on the traction. In a similar attention to detail, the tracks have enough variation and challenge to keep you going for a long old time. My only real quibble is with the graphical offering, as this is really not the kind of thing that should be gracing our Megadrives nowadays.

COMMENT



GUS

Megadrive race games have come on in leaps and bounds since Super Monaco (which I have always hated). F1 was one of the best steps forward, and Kawasaki builds on its success, with faster, smoother frame rates and expanded play features like bike damage and the effect of weather. It only suffers from a rather dowdy appearance — caused both by the simplistic polygons and the dull colours. However it does have a really good racing feel, quite different to F1, and convincingly like that of a bike. I wouldn't expect this to capture the attention of any other than bike freaks, but it should be a firm favourite amongst them.

GRAPHICS — 72

▲A highly realistic feel to the bike and the tracks has been incorporated.
▼If only some more time had been spent on the visuals to make this a more

SOUND — 69

▼Nothing really spectacular. The engine noises are a bit whiny and the incidental music is on the poor side.

PLAYABILITY — 86

▲After initial handling difficulties and a fair amount of over-steering, you'll find yourself pushed to the limit chasing after the opposition.

LASTABILITY — 84

▲14 standard tracks, eight hour endurance track, and all of the play options are a good sign for a long life

VFM — 82

▲Not quite cut-price, but nevertheless a sensible price tag for a pretty good product.

OVERALL — 83

Behind this ugly duckling lies a huge amount of superior programming that results in a highly realistic racer.



1-2 PLAYERS

8 MEG

GAME TYPE
SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE	TBA
BY	TIME WARNER
RELEASE	MARCH

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES:EZILCH
SKILL LEVELS:2
RESPONSIVENESS: STIFF
GAME DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE

1ST DAY SCORE
BEAT SECOND BOSS.

ORIGIN
A long overdue conversion of a classic Amiga game.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Shoot fings wiv yer layzers and doj aylien bullits.

MEGA

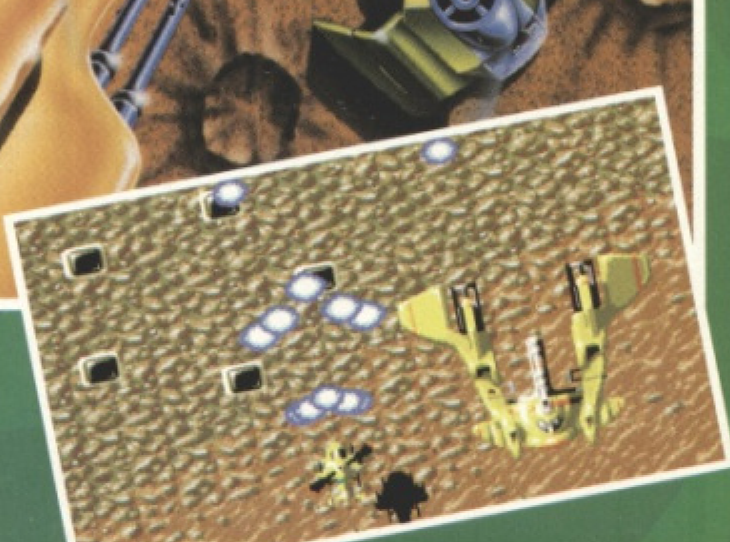


The Amiga. A hoary old disc-based lump of beige with a few good games on it. In between excruciatingly long loading pauses, enough RPGs to make Bilbo Baggins jack it all in, and more crashes than Barry Sheene, the odd game did shine through.

Of the millions released, Rainbow Islands, Speedball II and Kick Off were of particular note, but equally hot was a completely original blaster released by Sales Curve (you know, the guys who became Storm, Windy, and eventually SCI) called SWIV. A vertical blaster, it was famed because A) It was pretty good B) because it loaded as it went along, meaning there was no annoying waiting around. However, as the Megadrive doesn't load at all. Ever. What novelty value can it offer us hard to please Sega types.in order to beat off fierce competition from the blasters already out? Well, read on and you'll see. Lazy sods.

OOH, HOW USEFUL

'Power-Ups, Power-Ups, where for art thou, Power-Ups?' Well, actually they're hidden in a variety of places. Most conspicuous of the bunch are the large protective bubbles which are found within glowing canisters. These surround the player's craft and make them temporarily invincible, but also serve a secondary purpose — because if you choose to shoot them rather than wearing one, they white out the screen in a 'Smart Bomb' flash. Yer basic craft is also armed with three weapon types at the beginning of the game, but the yellow cylinders which punctuate each stage contain a series of power-ups for each (adding three-way-fire, etc), and homing missiles which are released using the C button.

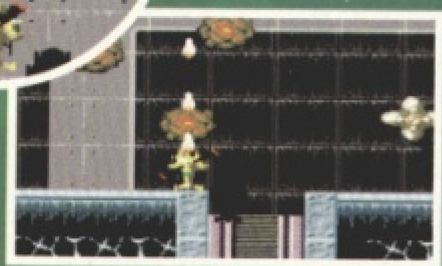


SWIV

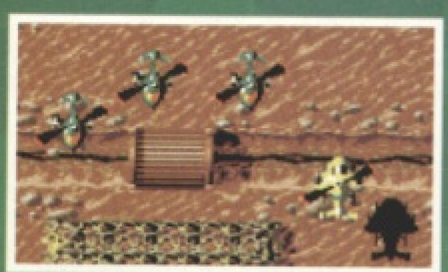
A HISTORY OF TIME

SWIV came about because years ago SCI had handled a conversion of the Silkworm coin-op for Virgin. The resultant conversion was really cool for the time, and ideas were hatched for a sequel. However, SCI couldn't get hold of the rights, so they started work on a game which was different enough not to infringe copyright, but also retained some of Silkworm's better ideas. Thus, although Silkworm was a horizontally-scrolling blast with loads of power-ups, SWIV became a vertical scroller with the same power-ups but a few more added for good measure. Similarly, unable to call the game Silkworm II, they skipped two sequels and opted for SWIV — an acronym of Silkworm IV! The basic idea behind SWIV is that an unnamed alien menace has invaded Earth, and has laid fortresses and enemy squadrons all over the place. Jumping into either a jeep or a helicopter, the player must blast a path to the final boss. However, each of the vehicles has its advantages and drawbacks, making for a slight strategic bent to the action. But only a slight one.









▲ *Farmer Jenkins was surprised to see his crop of Helicopters growing.*

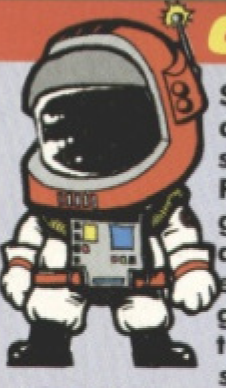
COMMENT



STEVE

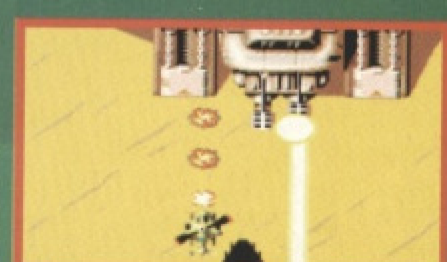
Crikey, this is a blast from the past! Mega SWIV takes me back to my days when I worked on an Amiga mag, and the days when a frill-less shoot 'em up could wow the gaming fraternity. We've come a long way since then, and the well overdue Mega SWIV just doesn't impress like it used to — mind you, a lot of this can be put down to the fact that this isn't half as good as the Amiga original! The once elegant sprites have been replaced by chunkier, lard-ass versions which stroll across the screen as they blast away at the flickering alien hordes. Similarly, the weapon upgrade system isn't half as simple as it used to be and unless you have the right gun at the right time, things gets stupidly limiting. Mega SWIV dates back to the days of 'meat'n'potato' blasters — sadly, we're all used to cordon bleu ones like Red Zone and Probotector, these days. There are a few plus points (good boss design and lots to shoot) but this never comes close to impressing. Oh yeah, and don't play as the jeep — it's utter crap.

COMMENT



GUS

Steve talks about frill-less, to that I would add thrill-less. Playing SWIV is about as stimulating as double Algebra on a late Friday afternoon. SWIV is a relic of past gaming days, with simple scrolling action, and a limited amount of levels (compensated for by over difficult gameplay). The graphics are dull (most of the conflict seems to take place over Emmerdale) and the sound lacks any of the explosive oomph of a top-quality blaster. Basically one to avoid.



GRAPHICS — 69

▲ Erm, there's a lot of them...
▼ Sadly, the sprites tend to flicker and everything is mud-coloured.

SOUND — 72

▲ Booms, blasts and adequate effects.
▼ Hardly the most imaginative music.

PLAYABILITY — 74

▲ You know what you're in for and this is a very solid, basic blaster.
▼ The jeep is awful to control and the 'chopper a little sluggish.

LASTABILITY — 67

▲ Plenty of levels and inventive bosses.
▼ Frustration at the often unnecessary loss of life is annoying.

VFM — 52

▼ Nah, sorry, this is dated and overpriced.

OVERALL — 66

Whilst filling most shoot 'em up quotas, this looks and plays like a recently dug up fossil. An odd choice for release.



1 PLAYERS

GAME TYPE
SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE	£34.99
BY	ACCLAIM
RELEASE	MARCH

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD/MENACER
CONTINUES: NONE
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE

1ST DAY SCORE
2, 552, 529

ORIGIN
Along the lines of Probe's Terminator 2 arcade conversion, but with FMV footage for the sprites and backdrops.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Guide your cursor at a fast pace across the screen to defend yourself and your friends against the blood-crazed zombie onslaught.

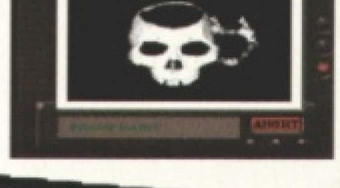
CORPSE KILLER

'A soulless human corpse, still dead, but taken from the grave and endowed by sorcery with a mechanical semblance of life'. No not the words of Norma Major, but the American writer W B Seabrook who claims to have seen armies of zombies working the fields of Haiti. Chinny reckon! Yet soon after this discovery the zombie became the darling of the film industry, inspiring countless episodes of mindless undead action. From White Zombie to the immortal Return of the Living Dead cinema audiences have been running scared from the possibility that one day long gone relatives will rise from the ground and seek vengeance.

The zombie screen heritage is now set to join the interactive generation in Acclaim's latest shoot 'em up adventure starring a cast of a million zombies and one mad scientist. As a Lieutenant in the American Special Forces, you must locate and destroy the crazed madman Dr Hellman and his monstrous minions before they seize the graveyard and threaten the very existence of humanity as we know it. Spooky stuff!









▲ *The recently-revived zombie close-formation Aikido squad (not pictured).*



ROOTS MAN

Particularly useful are the Datura plants. This rare local root can be made into an ointment which can be applied as either a cure against energy-sapping zombie bites or to coat your ammo, making them fatal to zombies.





ZOMBIES IN A POD



The boffins in the secret service labs have knocked together an extremely handy gadget in the form of the DataPod. Blessed with a direct satellite link and processing power to match a high spec Pentium, the Pod carries all of the data you will require on your mission and are unpgradable by picking up further pods. Shall we take a looksee?

MAP



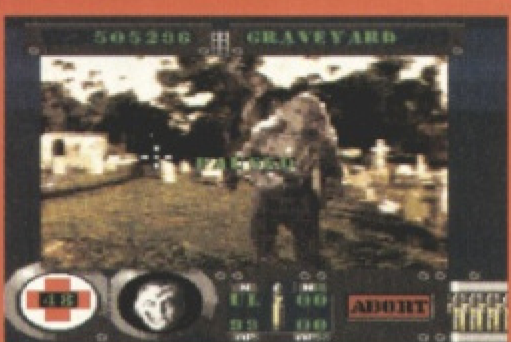
While on the island of Cay Noir, the map is your link to the locations. Outside of Zombie Town various other missions include Winston's own personal hunt for his treasure trove, and Julie's chase for the scoop of a lifetime. The map also indicates possible locations for Datura and Ju-Ju sticks.

INFORMATION WINDOWS

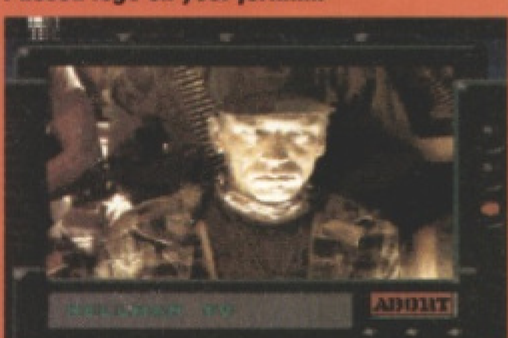


On arrival on the island you're going to need the information windows to identify all of the different characters and objects.

When you open the window, The DataPod will give you either a video clip or a brief description courtesy of Winston.



▲ *Excuse me, sir, you seem to be wearing a Paused logo on your jerkin...*



▲ *It's 8:38 and for the first time today we ask "where are you Keith?"*









COMMENT



Let's face it, FMV games don't have a great track record. What is usually built up as the next fully interactive experience, ends up being a fuzzy outing for second-rate actors. So when it came to sitting down with Corpse Killer, naturally I feared the worst. However after playing for a short while, I found myself strangely drawn into the world of gunning down zombies. There's no denying the graphics leave a lot to be desired — grainy FMV, and some badly animated zombie moonwalkers —, but at least this time they've adapted the action to play more like a game. One of the better products on the Mega-CD market, but still no must have.

COMMENT



Corpse Killer does everything I hate about these so-called interactive movies. Yes, there's a good plot revolving around voodoo — and as a horror film fan this was enough to get me interested. But the gameplay is just soooo poor it's unbelievable. This is a second-rate Operation Wolf with the player just moving a poxy cursor on to crap sprites you can see coming from a mile away. Yes, they've tried to add an element of strategy and the links are very nice, but you still come back to the tatty shooting gallery. This is a massive step back for Digital Pictures who seemed to be getting it right with Double Switch. This game has one thing in common with its zombies: it stinks.

GRAPHICS

69

▲ One of the more graphically interactive titles.
▼ But still grainy FMV and far too much repetition in the zombie attacks.

SOUND

70

▲ Meaty pings and zombie squeals pepper the music.
▼ Not a great deal more, and the speech is often cut short by the CD updating.

PLAYABILITY

63

▲ Strangely fun to play — particularly if you're a fan of arcade shooters.
▼ It does get repetitious returning to the same locations time after timea.

LASTABILITY

62

▲ The difficulty setting is sufficient to make sure you don't complete the mission too quickly.
▼ But the lack of real substance could inspire boredom..

VFM

62

▲ A real boost for under serviced Mega-CDs.
▼ But you could get so much more game for the same amount of cash.

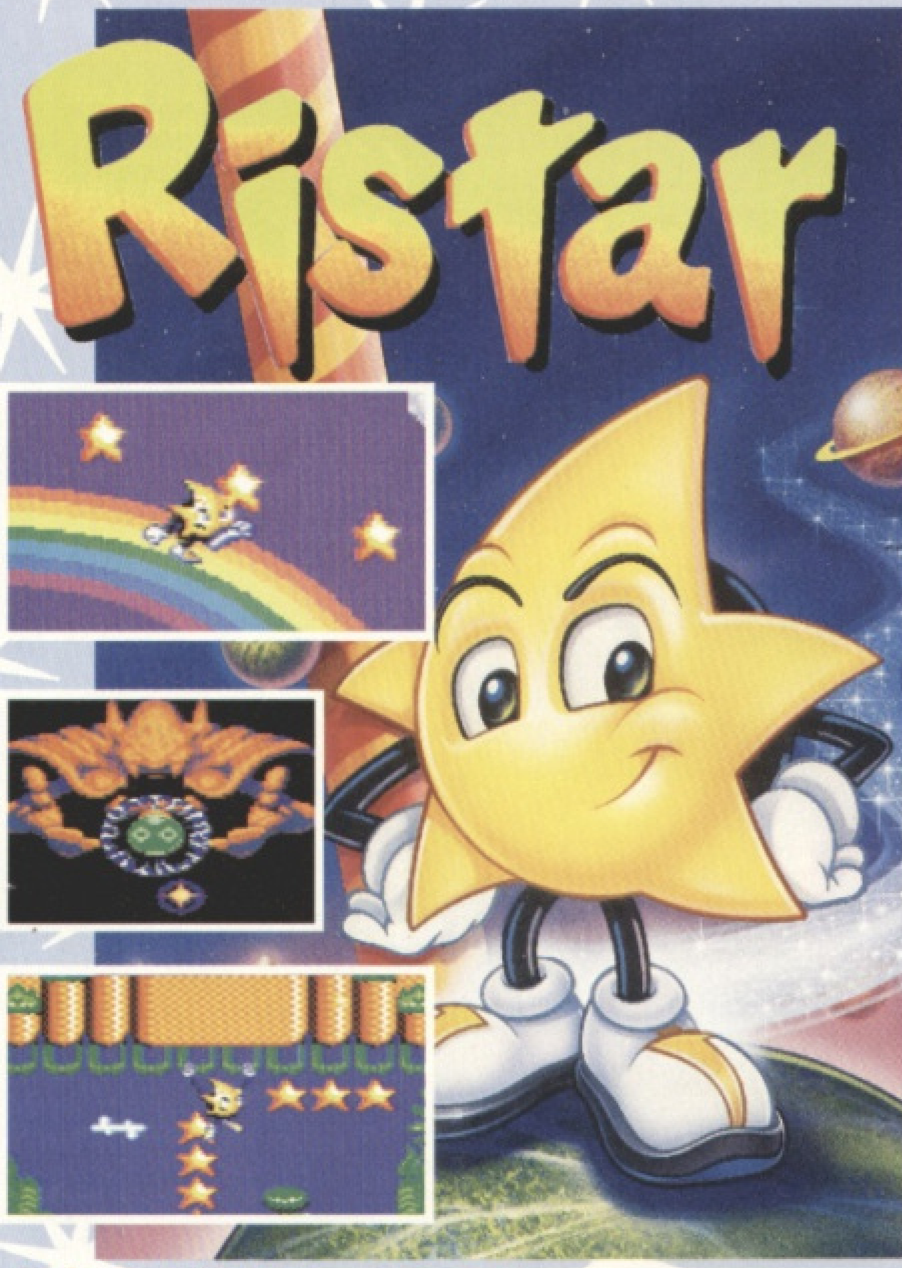
OVERALL

63

A reasonable FMV effort with even some elements of humour, but couldn't hope to be anything more than a two-dimensional real actor blaster.

PLAYERS	1
MEG	4
PRICE	£29.99
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	FEBRUARY
GAME TYPE	PLATFORM

Ristar



Traditionally, Hollywood is the place to hang around in if you want to become a star. Day or night you can guarantee that downtown LA will be full of nubile young wannabees – all high on hope and without a chance in the world. But there's a place that's even more competitive than Hollywood, and the stakes are about four times as high. And it's just down the road from LA's stamping grounds too.

Yup, in Silicon Valley, hopefuls are striving to hit the big time as young as six months old, and the scary thing is that by the time they're around three or four, their careers could be over. Like forever. And then of course, they're stuck with names like Dynamite Headdy, Bubsy and James Pond and subjected to ridicule for the rest of their lives. But budding young Ristar has an advantage over all the rest — you see he's already a star. No, I mean he IS a star. Really.

COMMENT



STEVE

Blimey, this is closer to the 16bit game than I would have thought possible. Granted, the stages aren't quite as busy as those of the original, but this is a fine conversion and no messing. On the Megadrive, Ristar is destined to get lost against the Sonics of the world, but on the Game Gear Ristar is more than average — and certainly better than Triple Trouble. It doesn't offer anything new, but it has the playability and more than enough stages. Smart.

SHOOTING STAR

If you stumble across some doughnut-esque rings on your travels, don't ignore them in your hastiness to travel ever-right. Ristar can swing on these discs and if he does it for long enough, he goes all sparkly. This turns him into a sort of super-star, and by letting go of button two, he'll promptly whizz all around the level. Sometimes you'll need to do this simply to get through a level, but if you use the buttons to propel yourself higher, you'll gain a height bonus at the end of each stage.





WE'RE GONNA MAKE YOU A STAR (OH YES)

Ooh Ristar, you're so-oo good aren't you? Not only can you scale walls, and generally swing yourself all around the shop, you can use your special extendible arms to dispense of any of those cheeky woodland creatures. Want to get rid of that nasty blue blob that's blocking your way? Simply grab hold of him, bash him against your bonce and he's gone. And you can, like, interact with the scenery too. Yup, Risters can use his arms to hold on to floating flowers and othersuch airborne devices, which hopefully take him to previously unreachable areas of each level.

COMMENT



PAUL

Even though Ristar borrows almost all of his features from Sega's past platform heroes, Sega have certainly made a huge effort to ensure that the graphics and gameplay are of top quality. Almost all of the features from the Megadrive version have made their way onto the smaller screen, and it's these features that make Ristar slightly more appealing than the usual Sonic clones. And unlike most of its rival handheld games, there's plenty of levels and the gameplay is quite challenging, too. Admittedly, the concept is derivative of almost every other platformer going, but it's still damned good fun and the graphics will certainly give haggard looking handhelds a bit of a facelift.

GRAPHICS	90	Some of the best sprites to grace the Game Gear. Oh yes.
SOUND	78	Quirky, beepy effects and passable music. Standard stuff.
PLAYABILITY	84	Nice control ideas make Ristar one of the more versatile handheld heroes.
LASTABILITY	76	The password system was a big mistake — it makes it far too easy.
VFM	79	Not pricey, but the Game Gear does have rather too many platform games.
OVERALL	82	Great graphics, great gameplay, great package, but little originality.

1 PLAYERS	4 MEG
PRICE	£29.99
BY	INFOGRAMES
RELEASE	OUT NOW
GAME TYPE	PLATFORM

the SMURFS

We got a phone call the other day from the peeps at Infogrames. When they announced the arrival of their Smurfs game for the Master System and Megadrive they sent us little Smurf toys of every description. We got hunting Smurfs, cannibal Smurfs — even a Smurf snow shaker thing.Anyway, we'd forgotten all about these when we get a call from them asking if we'd seen the cover of one of the day's newspapers. Apparently, a Smurf figure had been sold for over a grand and it was idenitcal to one of the ones sent to one of the mags!

Anyway, in a more roundabout way than usual, this little tale brings us to this Game Gear version of the Infogrames platformer. I know there isn't a great deal of relevance between the intro and the game, but as this is basically the Master System version ported to the handheld, I thought you'd be familiar with it already. I mean, you're not thick are you?



COMMENT



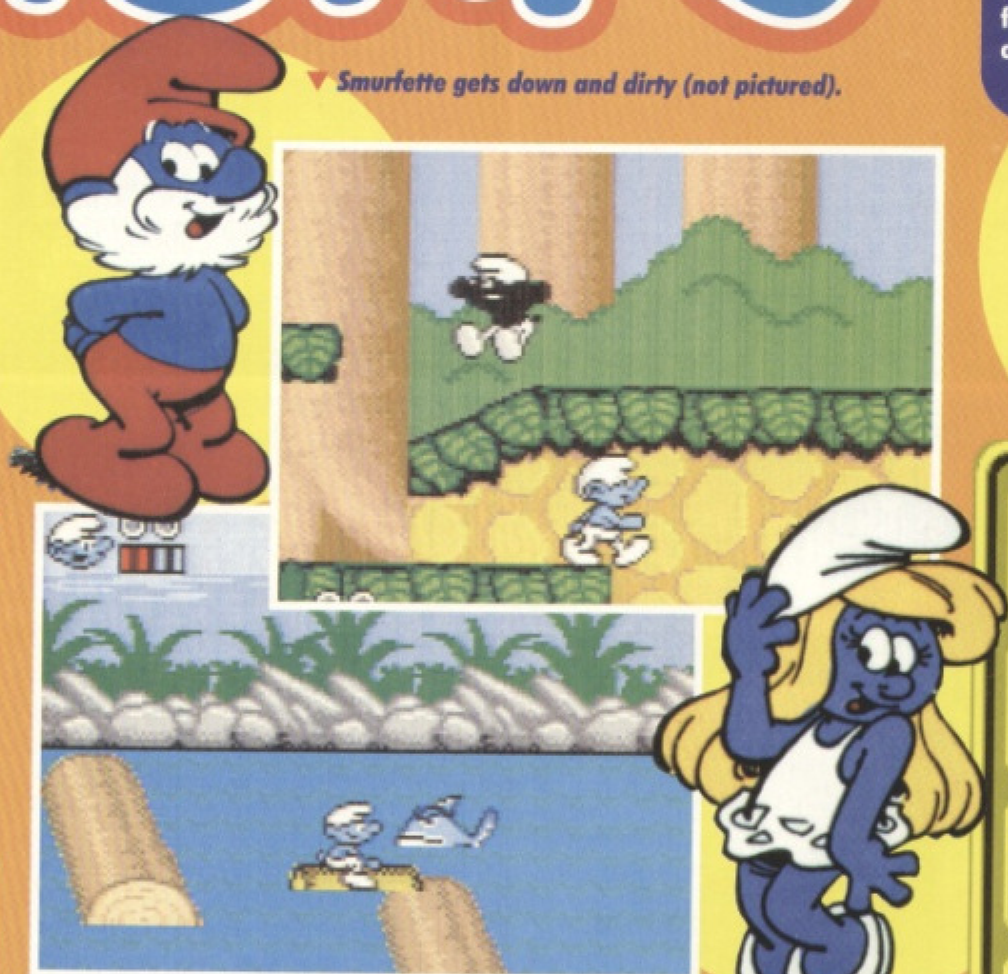
STEVE

I thought the Master System version of this was cool. It was playable, untaxing, but varied — perfect 8bit fodder. What's more, what goes for the MS version also applies here as te two games are virtually identical with the levels and features which made the MS game so good translated locl, stock and barrel. Granted Game Gear owners aren't quite as starved as Master System owners for good games, but this is one of the best platformers I've seen make it to a handheld.

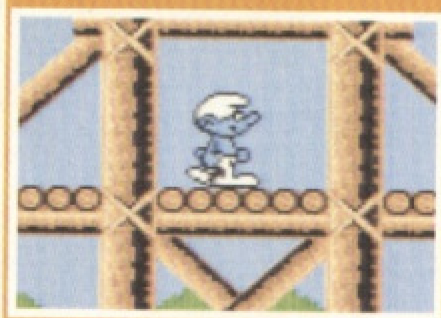
VERE ART YOU ALL COMINK FROM?

As in the MS version, the player guides Hefty Smurf through the assorted caverns, forests and waterways which make up the path to Gargamel's castle. Once again, the evil garg is upt o his old tricks and has whisked Smurfette away to his castle knowing that, as the only female, the Smurf race is doomed without her. Thus, a series of platform, boat and obstacle-laden stages await Hefty's attentions, whilst any ails can be resolved using the many fruits which adorn each stage.

Smurfette gets down and dirty (not pictured).









COMMENT



PAUL

The Smurfs have been doing the rounds over the past couple of months, so it was about time that the trusty handheld had a look-in. On all formats the Smurfs have made quite a hit, and the Game Gear is no exception. The graphics are bold and colourful, and the gameplay is varied and simple enough to make the experience a joy. Nothing too groundbreaking in the way of platform originality, but at the end of the day, a sound investment for fun on the move.

GRAPHICS	87	Bright and well defined, but they tend to slow down every now and then.
SOUND	87	Yep, there's definitely sound. And it's more than adequate.
PLAYABILITY	90	A little frustrating at times, but perseverance brings variety.
LASTABILITY	86	Tough and loads of stages. The perfect combination.
VFM	87	Normal price. Loads for your wongah.
OVERALL	88	Once again the dated heroes prove they've still got what it takes in the gameplay arena.

SPACE

1 PLAYER	16 MEG
PRICE	TBA
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	JANUARY
GAME TYPE	

Just when arcade games had started to get in a rut, and the only way to liven up a shoot 'em up was to bolt an Uzi on to the front or put it in a huge static cabinet, Sega took the humble blaster into a new direction using a hydraulically-moved cabinet and state-of-the-art sprite-moving techniques.

The first game to utilise such a system was Space Harrier which dropped a red-sweatered sprite into an alien-infested planet with no means of protection bar a large bazooka tucked under his arm. As the assorted chequered planet surfaces whizz beneath your feet, wave after wave of aliens come with it, spitting forth streams of oval laser bolts. At the end of every stage lurks a boss of some sort, and the usual method of shooting them loads of times comes into effect. But you probably knew that.









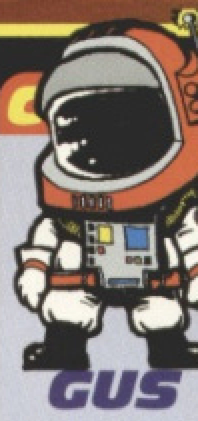
▲ Baked bean powered blastathonics.





▲ A large 32-bit monster — yoiks!

COMMENT



GUS

This is the biggest mistake Sega could possibly make. With the 32X they should be taking things forward, not bringing attention to decade old games. So what if the conversion is spot on? Panorama Cotton looks more impressive. Space Harrier was okay, but only okay in its day, but today it has the same appeal as the Gary Glitter gang show. The truth is that this is all Sega have for 32X owners in January. Talk about 'in the bleak mid-winter'.

AFTER BURNER

Ever heard the phrase 'a quart in a pint pot'? Well, it can best be used when describing the unlikely conversions of past Sega coin-ops over to humble machines like the C64, Spectrum and Atari ST. As Sega were wowing arcade-goers with speedy spritefests like Space Harrier, Afterburner and Power Drift, owners of little home machines awaited conversions they hoped would capture the look and feel of the arcade game. Some hope.

As such, C64 owners made do with a version of Power Drift without the original's rotational scrolling, Spectrum owners were chuffed(ish) with a wire-frame Ferrari in OutRun, and ST owners didn't bother buying Galaxy Force II because it was so crap. Now, however, in these days of 32-bit plug-ins, our home machines are more than capable of recreating the great coin-ops of the 80s. Which is why Sega have converted Afterburner and its Top Gun-style tomfoolery to the 32X lock-on, stock and barrel. At least I suppose that's why they've done it.

1 PLAYER	16 MEG
PRICE	£49.95
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	JAUARY
GAME TYPE	SHOOT 'EM UP









HARRIER





BOSS-TING YOUR ASS

When a path has been blown through the many stone heads, flying insects and gun-toting droids which inhabit each stage, one of several boss sprites makes an appearance. The first is a snake-like dragon which weaves in and out of the screen, whilst others are a selection of stone heads or a larger version of the mid-level robots. These fly in and out of the screen until they are blown out of existence. At which point the next named level is revealed.

◀ *Attack of the jelly beans!*



COMMENT



STEVE

I used to really like the Space Harrier coin-op but, without the thrill of a moving machine and some nine years after its release it isn't half as impressive these days. When you consider how we take the likes of Virtua Fighter for granted, and enjoy sprite-based blasters far more complex than Space harrier, it makes you wonder why Sega bothered with this conversion — it's not as if it offers varied gameplay! As with Afterburner this is a pointless conversion, and isn't likely to endear the 32X to the buying public.

GRAPHICS 81
Large sprites, and the bosses are just as good as they were all that time ago.

SOUND 67
Horrible in-game music. But at least its authentic.

PLAYABILITY 77
More skill than Afterburner, but the sprite detection often seems a little hit or miss.

LASTABILITY 51
Once you've seen a couple of bosses it all starts getting a little samey.

VFM 42
You probably own the Megadrive version (but never bother playing it). Best to stick to it.

OVERALL 49
Another 32X non-starter. Why this was considered for release is beyond us.



INTACTUS

Fans of the ageing Sega coin-op will be well chuffed to learn that every pixel of the original has made it to the Glade Mushroom lookalike. From the take-off on the good ship Afterburner, the game faithfully recreates the canyons, forests and nightscapes of the arcade game. Similarly, the re-arming and re-fuelling screens have made it across, as have the post-stage interludes where the OutRun car makes a sneaky cameo appearance.



COMMENT



GUS

Video-gaming is in danger of becoming swamped in pointless nostalgia. First, the SNES homage to Space Invaders, now this. Eight years ago Afterburner's gameplay was as substantial as a jet engine's exhaust. Qu'elle Surprise, the years have not been kind. It's a fiddly, unrewarding and now unconvincing game. It doesn't impress technically either. Star Wars Arcade is the shoot 'em up to go for.

COMMENT



STEVE

Am I missing the point here, or was the 32X supposed to herald a new age in video-gaming? If so, then just why is a dated game like Afterburner one of the first titles for it? The original coin-op was a very shallow affair which, if it wasn't for the hydraulic casing and fancy sprites, would have been dismissed as just another fast-moving but repetitive blast. As such, whilst it is indeed an accurate conversion, I fail to see why we are supposed to be impressed by an eight-year-old game. On equal terms of playability, there are versions of this for the Megadrive and Master System for less cash, making this a redundant conversion.

GRAPHICS 85
All the fast-moving sprites and detailed backdrops of the coin-op. Arcade perfect, in fact.

SOUND 76
Bongs and whizzes galore, and rather weak versions of the tunes and ditties.

PLAYABILITY 74
It's fast-moving and enemy flak is plentiful. There are loads of levels to keep you busy...

LASTABILITY 47
... Sadly, most of them are pretty much the same, with little method to the action.

VFM 42
Not the most auspicious of starts for a new piece of kit.

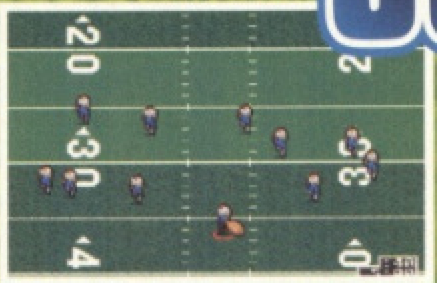
OVERALL 53
Yes it is indeed arcade perfect, but some eight years old, dated and shallow.

1-2 PLAYERS	8 MEG
PRICE	TBA
BY	ACCOLADE
RELEASE	MARCH
GAME TYPE	SPORTS

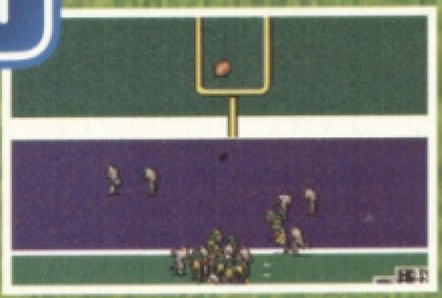
UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS 95

Hi my name's Chuck Cheefer and welcome to the all MEAN MACHINES playoff featuring tonite, Unnecessary Roughness from the Accolade coaching school. We're coming live and direct to you for what promises to be one of the most in-depth and informed reviews this side of the great divide.

Well the chaps are out on the field limbering up, ready to face the tackles of the opposition defense, Playability and Lastability. But as we all know the real challenge comes from the ultimate in quarterbacks, the old pro Overall Score. Well as I speak the crowd are beginning to cheer the start of play and the cheerleaders are calling out the chants for the stacks of stats, the inclusion of every player from the NFL, and the four-player facility. So let's get down to the sidelines on the road to the bowl.



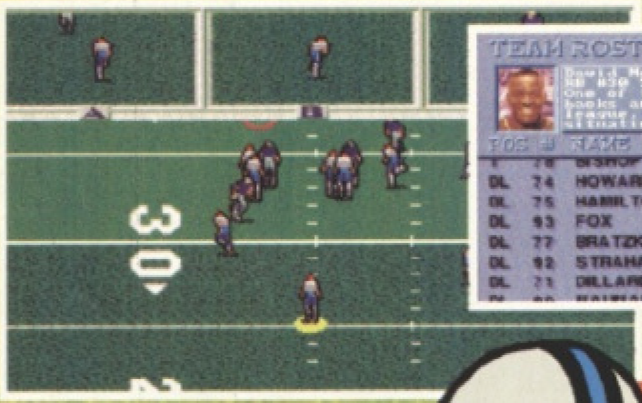
▲ The Zombie Hick team run on to the field. I reckon.

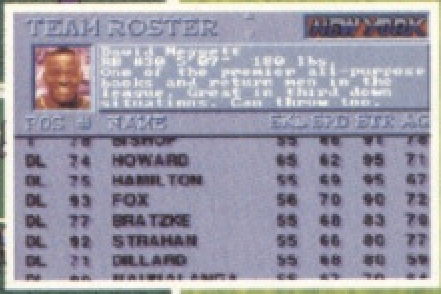


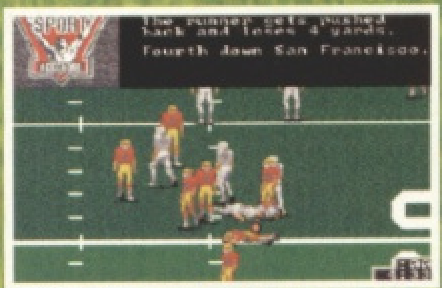
▲ Hey, look everybody a bloody great tuning fork.

WHO'S ZOOMING WHO?

Once you've gone through all of the players and their specific statistics, it's time to hit the field and do the job you've come here to do. The view is taken from above the goalposts, covering the field from sideline to sideline and scrolling to follow the action, but when the action gets intense the view zooms in on the area to allow you precise control of the players.







▲ Not Michael Howard and Paula Hamilton, surely?

ALL STAR ACTION

All of the players from the 48 teams in the American National Football League are included in the game. The combined statistics from each individual player have been used to build up an overall team rating—allowing you make your games as evenly or unfairly matched as possible. Plus, in the fine tradition of Accolade titles you can admire the digitised images of all of the athletes in their glory.



COMMENT

GUS

The one thing I cannot bring myself to do this month is be kind to this game. Many have tried and failed to capture the genius of Park Place's Madden's football series (even Park Place fumbled a couple of the sequels) but this is nowhere even near the acceptable alternative mark. It's a sorry slip-up for Accolade who seemed to have cracked it with recent form. Now we're back to abysmal graphics and animation and shambolic gameplay. Hiding behind an impenetrable wall of stats is a thoroughly bad game of American Football, but the game's most off-putting feature is its unbelievably crap appearance. Although it has been said elsewhere, the choice of title for this game couldn't have been more grimly apt.



COMMENT

PAUL

Recognising the Madden series as the benchmark for all console American Football games, Accolade have tried to break-away from this style. The inclusion of every player from the NFL with their photos and their abilities follows the tradition of providing games for the stats nuts. But unfortunately the stacks of stats are at the expense of the rest of the game. Graphically it's nowhere as good looking as Madden, lacking refinement and detail. And in the playability stakes it suffers from a distinct lack of pace and some way off collision detection. If you consider yourself to be a top football fan hungry for statistics and set patterns, this may well be for you, but if you want a game you can plug in and play, then I'd stick to Madden.

GRAPHICS 53
The zoom feature is a nice idea. But the field and players look extremely basic.

SOUND 59
The sound in the game fails to match the quality of the intro speech.

PLAYABILITY 50
A huge variety of strategic plays, but slow and clumsy in execution.

LASTABILITY 40
Hours of endless fun for Mr Logic. Hours of torture for the rest of us.

VFM 49
You'd probably be better off buying one of those sports almanac book things

OVERALL 46
Acceptable for those interested in stats, but shabby in terms of entertainment value.

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MEAN YOB



For a change we've done away with the drivelling insults as, quite frankly, the replies take up more time than they're worth. As such, the letters contained this month actually try to convey a message. This may come as a shock to some of you, but for me it was a welcome change to have something a little more substantial to eat my chips out of. If you want to be equally clever, write to: PRODUCTION LINE VELOUR TRACKSUITS MEAN YOB, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU

PEACHES AND CREAM

Dear Yob

Well done on a brilliant mag. I have a little problem that has been bothering me about the age rating of games. A few days ago I purchased Urban Strike and I have to admit it is better than Desert and Jungle Strike. But while I was reading the back of the box, I noticed the ratings. Now not to put too finer a point on it, but how bloody sad are these ELSPA people? Even though they had rated the game for ages 3-10, I can't see a child of three walking into a computer store to buy the game. Next they'll be banning Sonic for not being violent enough!

Ronnie Jackson, Harlow, Essex

YOB: The whole ELSPA rating thing is a good enough idea, but until some stability comes into the ratings it all seems a little daft. I mean, yes, by all mean classify contentious games like Night Trap and MKII, but do we really need to be warned about Sonic and The Flintstones. Surely it's only worth giving a rating to those that deserve it...

TOWN HOUSE

Dear Yob

I'm just writing to ask you about the review of Doom in Issue 27. In the PC version of Doom, there are eight guns, but in your review you printed only six. What happened to the BFG 9000 and the Chain Gun?

Also I think you should give a £100 prize for the best letter in your mailbag like in CV&G.

Andrew Farrant, Little Shelford, Cambridge

YOB: There are only six in the 32X version. Don't blame us blame Sega. And I bet you'd like £100 for the best letter, then you could grizzle as we chose even the most inane drivel over yours.

BEAUTY SALON

Dear Yob

What is happening to the end-



▲ What a crock. No it's a turtle, but both are green. From Mick Dalston.

ings on games?! In my opinion there is the odd game with a nice ending, but most of the others are basically crap! I really feel game endings have to improve. I own a Megadrive, and have quite a good selection of games, and most of them have boring endings. I don't know anything about producing games, but is it because there isn't enough memory left on the cart?
Andrew Clark, Hessle
YOB: Too bloody right. I piled all the way through MKII only to receive a crap ending with more spelling mistakes than a toddler's schoolbook. The answer to your question is that it is normally a matter of time. Still, it's not all bad news, Earthworm Jim had a cool ending — and made sense as to why you had to launch the cow...

FITNESS CLUB

Dear Yob
I have had an idea that you might like to think about. On magazines like Sega Mag and Electronic Gaming Monthly the cover has a spine. As a regular reader, I have found that your stapled spines tend to rip. I wouldn't mind paying a little extra for something that would keep it looking neater. Maybe other readers feel the same? Keep up the good work.
John Green, Sheffield
YOB: It's a possibility. I was going to ask why you wanted one, but then I realised: it's because your already completely spineless.

JACUZZI

Dear Yob
You've been getting a lot of crap in your letters page of late, so I think it's time for a serious slagging letter. First, I agree totally with Steve's comments last month regarding the snivelling slobs at Digitiser. If they've got a problem with your esteemed mag, then they should ring up and state it, instead of making untrue and fabricated comments on their few pages of daily drivel. I mean, saying that you only get 70,000 readers compared to their million, is absolutely ludicrous, and a pitiful statement that only sadcases would accept. So what if they do get a million readers, — we all know precisely why, don't we? It's because Digitiser is FREE! It doesn't cost anything at all! So before the fools boast, they should start charging £2.25 a month to subscribe to Digitiser, and THEN see exactly how many readers they get! Let me tell you this, it would a much smaller figure than MEAN MACHINES! Personally I wish the ass-faced baboons at the Digitiser hovel would shut their pus-filled festering gobs, insert their heads up their rectums, and inhale deeply. It would do them, and us, the world of good!
Paul Johnson, Shadow Dweller of Skegness
YOB: Actually the Digitiser guys did reply to Steve's letter but all they did was call him a few names and say that if we wanted a fight they were ready. Needless to say, having seen the plankton that writes for their hallowed pages, I'm off to William Hill's to put some money on the lad Merrett. He could have Violet Berlin any day, too. But enough of that.



▼ A detail of Andrew Jackson 's bomberman opus.

STARLIGHT KEN

Dear Yob
I have been reading your magazine for two years now, and just lately I've noticed that you've missed a few games. What happened to Sonic Drift? I know it's shite but a review would have been nice. Also Pebble Beach Golf has been out of the shelves since November and so has Rock 'n' Roll Racing. How about a review? They're both £35 in my local shop, but I don't know whether they're any good. Time to pull your socks up!
Simon Welburn, Brighton
YOB: Sadly, despite being larger than most of our rivals, we still can't fit in every game we receive. We had a copy of Rock'n'Roll ages ago but never got round to reviewing it. As for Sonic Drift and Golf, they're only out on import and only a few copies made it over here. We don't tend to bother with a lot of the import games any more as they're all a bit crap, but if something doesn't get a review you can always guess it's either pretty duff or that the company is too scared to send it to us — which means the same thing.

CAMPING

Dear Yob
Being a person not at all influenced by television programmes, I'd just like to say, "Nintendo, I admire your work and contributions to the video game industry, and have enjoyed many of your 'classic' games including Mario Kart, Zelda 3, and Mario All-Stars. I also have the highest admiration for your recent arcade games, Cruisin' USA and Killer Instinct, with their excellent graphics and sound. But if you give the Seal of Approval to another game as shambolic as Rise of the Robots, and demanded the best part of £70 for it, I'd say OI!...Nintendo...NO!! It is neither the time or the place for a shoddy piece of programming that has about as much originality as Sega's next batch of 32X games! So hoppit!
Neil Degg, Cheshire
YOB: NO! Neil Degg, you may indeed think you are Cheshire's answer to the wonderful televisual comedian of BBC1 proportions, Sir Harry Enfield, but if you come round our manor saying 'Hello Matey Peeps' and doing dodgy Kevin impressions, a cuff around your actual lughole will be forthcoming. And we'd be perfectly justified in that, my son.



▲ A return to the crap old days of console rivalry and spaccy drawing.

There, quite interesting wasn't it. Makes a pleasant change. Let's just hope it lasts...



Shall I tell you what I really hate? Pop tossers, that's what. PJ and Duncan, Let Loose, Boyzone and Deuce — PTs the lot of 'em. I mean, just what saps buy those records, and who decided that PJ and soddin' Duncan were rappers. Jeez, it's enough to make Snoop Doggy Dog give it all up! Anyway, that's my question over for the month, here's where we pass over to yours. Send your queries to:
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DIARRHOEA

Dear Steve
I own a Megadrive, so could you please answer these couple of questions?
1. Is Rise of the Robots worth a look at?
2. Could you list these games from best to worst: Ristar, Rugby World Cup, PGA 3?
3. Will there be a 3D golf game for the Megadrive in the future?
4. Being a PGA fan, is it worth getting PGA 3 if I have PGA 2?
5. Will BC Racers be coming out for the Megadrive?
Robert Jones, Cheadle, Cheshire
STEVE: 1. No, it's complete arse. 2. Rugby, PGA, Ristar. 3. Nah, there's Links for the Mega-CD and Tee-Off for the 32X, but not for the stand-alone Megadrive. 4. Only if you're a really ardent fan. 5. Nope — wait for Speed Racer instead.

CONCEIVE

Dear Steve
I would be most grateful if you would answer these questions for me as I received a Menacer gun and the Lion King for Christmas.
1. Are there any other games coming out or already available for the Menacer?
2. I realise that big companies like Sega and EA are very busy, but I have some ideas of my own and was wondering how someone would go about showing them to a company?
3. When Theme Park comes out for the Megadrive, will you be able to go on the rides like on the 3DO?
4. Is Biker Mice From Mars coming out on the Megadrive?
5. Is Wing Commander coming out on the Mega-CD?
6. Do think Sega would accept ideas for a Night Trap 2 even after the controversy over the first one?
Jonathan Mack, North Shields, Tyne and Wear
STEVE: 1. T2: The Arcade Game from Acclaim, Body Count from Sega, er... that's about it! 2. By writing to them. 3. Probably not. 4. No. 5. It's out on import, but is so duff it won't make it officially. 6. If Digital Pictures decide to do a sequel, it will come out via Acclaim.

RHYTHM

Dear Steve
I bought myself a Megadrive about five months ago and I have a few questions for you.
1. For Christmas I asked for SSF II. A man in a shop over here in Dubai said the version he had only worked on a Megadrive II. So he conned my parents into buying a pirate copy. When I played it, it was completely messed up. All the names were wrong and the comments were in Japanese. I thought there were no technical differences between the Megadrive I and II?



2. Should I buy a Mega-CD or a 32X?
3. Sometimes when I play MKII with the test mode and finish it, the story comes up as normal and then it finishes, then it goes to a third round against Shao Kahn. As soon as I hit him he freezes and vibrates. I can't do anything to him except wait for the timer to run out. Is this a fault or am I supposed to find this excellent?
4. Your mag is usually very fair in its reviews, but you gave WWF Raw an awful review. I bought it and found it to be excellent. It has excellent graphics compared to past versions and a wide selection of options. Why the negative review?
Dominic, Dubai, UAE
STEVE: 1. There aren't. You'e been 'ad, my so. 2. 32X. Or a Saturn! 3. It's fault brought on by accessing the cheat. 4. Because it's repetitive crap requiring no skill whatsoever.

NECESSARY

Dear Steve
I have just got a 32X for Christmas, and I have a few questions to ask you.
1. Why are the games so expensive?
2. What happened to the battery back-up on Virtua Racing Deluxe?
3. When will the first game to use both the 32X and the Mega-CD come out and what will it be?
4. If used with the Mega-CD, could the 32X produce similar graphics to Road Rash on the 3DO?
5. Will Twisted be coming out on the 32X?
6. Which FMV games will be re-done for the 32X? I've heard Tomcat Alley is in the pipeline.
Chris Rayment, Hemel Hempstead, Herts
STEVE: 1. It's a new system and developing for such an unknown quantity is risky and initially expensive. 2. There ain't one. 3. Either Night Trap or Midnight Raiders – both are due in March. 4. Nope. 5. Nope. 6. Tomcat Alley isn't scheduled, but Midnight Raiders and its sequels are on the way, as are loads of titles from Digital Pictures.



MANOEUVRE

Dear Steve
When I play Doom on the 32X, I start at level six and then go on to level 15, but when I do this all I get are some credits and at the bottom it says C:/DOOM. Nothing happens when I press any of the buttons and I end up having to switch off or reset the game. The game should go back to level one where I should play to level six and then onto 16 and 17. Why does this happen and what should I do?
Amit Lahon, Hayes, Middlesex
STEVE: Take it back to the shop, mate...

PNEUMATIC

Dear Steve
I think your mag is superb, so please could you answer my questions?
1. Is Doom 2 coming out on the 32X?
2. Is Acclaim's Alien Trilogy on the 32X going to be cart of CD-based?
3. Is Virtua Fighter going to be released on the 32X?
A Wardrop, Dumbarton, Scotland
STEVE: 1. It hasn't been decided. 2. Cart-based. 3. It's feasible the machine could handle it, but Sega have no plans as of yet — perhaps when the Saturn is officially released they'll change their minds, though...

AGGREGATE

Dear Steve
I am thinking of buying a Saturn on import. Please could you answer my humble questions?
1. How much would I expect to pay for an import Saturn?
2. What leads would I need to make it run on a PAL TV, and would I need any special leads or mains adaptor?
Barry Paige, Tenterden
STEVE: 1. Between £500-650, plus a power supply converter (£30). 2. You'll need a signal conversion box, unless you have a SCART telly, for which you'll need the proper SCART cable.

BOURGEOIS

Dear Steve
Please answer these questions for me.
1. In the finished version of Micro Machines 2 for the Megadrive, why wasn't the stock car racing included as featured in your July issue?
2. Will Virtua Cop ever be released on the 32X or Saturn?
3. Are there any plans for a decent beat 'em up on the Mega-CD?
4. To play a four-player game on the 32X, will the game be on a J-Cart or will you need a four player adaptor?
Jed Mears, Selsey
STEVE: 1. Memory restrictions. 2. It has been confirmed, but is way, way off. 3. Nope. Eternal Champions is due, but I think it's crap. 4. It depends on the company.

CONSCIENTIOUS

Dear Steve
I own a Megadrive, but I feel that I need to upgrade to something a little more powerful. The 32X is looking quite promising, but here are some questions anyway.
1. Although the 32X looks pretty damn good, do you think there's any chance of it being dropped when the Saturn is released?
2. Will there be any decent platform games like Probotector released for the 32X?
3. Is there any chance Treasure will be releasing games for the 32X? Gunstar Heroes is till one of my favourites.
4. Don't you agree Underworld, Manic Miner, and Knight Lore (ZX Spectrum days) were excellent? I do.
Josh Robertson, Bradford-on-Avon
STEVE: 1. Apparently, they'll run side by side. Yeah, right. 2. Yeah, Treasure are working on a few, as are Konami. 3. See earlier answer. 4. Yes.

INSTANTANEOUS

Dear Steve
I'm a big Sega, Mean Machines, and Yuzo Koshio fan. Please could you answer my questions?
1. Is there going to be a Streets of Rage 4? If so when?
2. Will a Streets of Rage ever be released for the 32X and the Saturn?
3. Is a Shinobi game being planned for the 32X?
4. How many sprites it handle?
5. How many sound channels?
6. When playing Megadrive games through the 32X, does it improve the sound quality and screen definition?
Franklin Smith, Birmingham
STEVE: 1. Not until the end of summer. 2. Probably not. 3. Not as of yet, but needless to say one will appear eventually. 4. Loads. 5. Four. I think. 6. Yep, but only marginally.



Ok, that's enough for this month. There'll be more Q&A jocularity next month. I bet you can't wait. I know I can't. Hmm.

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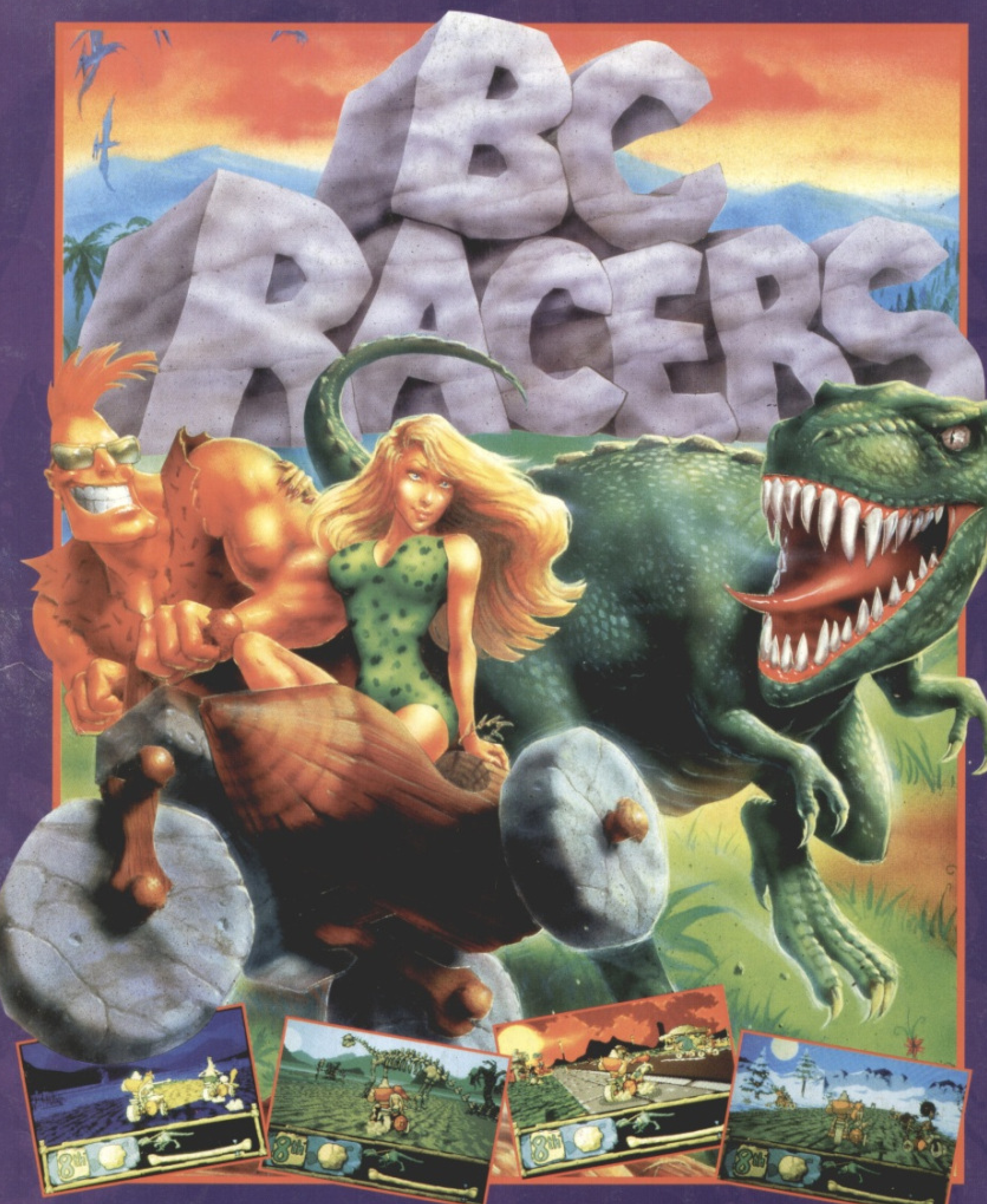
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